ONE LORD = ONE FAITH

VERNON JOHNSON

F. D. Turner

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AN EXPLANATION

BY

VERNON JOHNSON

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
55 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
1929

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FIRST EDITION

MADE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

"Jesus! I would so love him,
Love him as He has never yet been
loved." *St. Thérèse.*

VERITAS DOMINI MANET IN AETERNUM
(Ps. 117; 2)

PREFACE

I AM publishing this book as a little explanation, in answer to the many letters which I have received asking for the reason for my action in becoming a Catholic. After months of weary struggling, when at last I saw the coming end to be inevitable, I began to put some notes together. I did this in order to clear my own mind and to have something written to fall back upon in those moments, which I knew must come, when my human feelings might overwhelm my reason. But I did so also in order to have some explanation ready for others, should it be necessary.

From the countless letters which I have received, it is clear that some such explanation is required; and so, very humbly and with great diffidence, I offer this to those dear friends who have loved and trusted me so wonderfully and who are so completely at a loss to understand why I have acted as I have.

Thus it is in no sense a polemic, covering all possible argument for and against, but just a very simple account of those particular events and reasons which led me to take this step.

It will be seen that the supreme reason, behind all

others, was that I could not resist the claim of the Catholic Church to be the one True Church founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ to guard and teach the truth to all men till the end of time. She alone claims to be infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit in her teaching: she alone possesses the authority and unity necessary for such a Divine Vocation; and she alone, in the Papacy, gives any effective and working meaning to the position of St. Peter in Scripture. It was the positive fact of the Catholic Church from which I could not escape.

Thus the state of the Church of England was a very secondary difficulty and only served to confirm my growing belief in the Catholic Church. The Prayer Book controversy was, to me, more a symptom than anything else; though serious, it was never so serious, to me, as modernism. Modernism, I saw, as I came to understand it better, was clearly destroying the true conception of, and belief in, the Personality of Christ and His Godhead—the Foundation Truth of the Christian Religion.

It is inevitable that I should be charged with desertion. I can only remind people that I was always in the thick of it. Difficulties did not affect me seriously until I came to question the whole position, not because of the difficulties but because I had seen something else which I was increasingly conscious was Divine.

I first met with the Catholic Church as a living reality at Lisieux in 1925. Readers may wonder

why it was that it was so long before I took the final step.

The answer is that I am just a very ordinary Englishman; and, as such, I had within me, bred in my very bones, all the dread and fear and suspicion of Rome, and the distrust of what I considered ecclesiastical intrigue and Italian government—the latent hostility which I had inherited as part of the usual English education and tradition—all this I had to a quite extraordinary degree.

Thoroughly insular, I had never been abroad till 1925. And, so far as I can remember, till then I had only spoken twice to a Catholic priest, and then both times only casually. I had never been to a Catholic service, and had only occasionally looked in at Catholic churches. I say all this because people generally, and Catholics specially, do not seem to realize how utterly separated from one another Catholicism and Anglo-Catholicism are. So far as I was concerned, till 1925, they were entirely separate worlds.

I had never troubled about the Catholic Church and was completely satisfied with Anglo-Catholicism. It was not till I began to realize that "Rome might possibly be right" that I began to realize also how deep-set in my own subconscious self was this distrust of "Rome."

Thus, even after things became intellectually fairly clear, it was all something outside me. I was still bound in the bonds of prejudice and fear.

From the other side, another reason which held me back was the overwhelming shrinking from taking a course which must give such pain to countless souls whom I loved so dearly. Also I was convinced that I ought not to lay down a ministry which had been so greatly blessed so long as there was any possibility of being able to go on.

As to where the turning point comes in any great decision it is always desperately difficult to determine.

It seems to me that, when that moment approaches one is so overwrought and weary with the struggle that one only realizes that a certain step is inevitable, and one just gets up and staggers towards it in the dark.

To those who have always been Catholics the argument of this book will seem absurdly simple, and much of it may seem overdrawn. They will, I know, realize that this is written in a transitory stage, and expresses my mind at this particular moment, when still only on the threshold. To them the gain so far outweighs the loss. But they are within, they know the Church and it is their home. To the soul outside, groping towards the light, it is just leaving home and countless dearly loved scenes and faces and deliberately stepping into exile: it is an act of naked faith: it is only later on that that soul can possibly realize that the apparent place of exile is its home.

If, in the later pages of this book, I have seemed to

lift the veil too much—it is done with the greatest diffidence and for two reasons:

First, to let those countless souls who have shewn me their love and trust realize that, throughout it all, it was just the consciousness of the infinite pain and distress that my action must cause them that was such an overwhelming sorrow.

Secondly, because it has been my experience of those souls who have taken a similar step that it is not an easy action, taken in a moment of emotion, but a path of very great suffering, taken almost entirely in the dark, only illumined by the certainty which comes by faith.

VERNON JOHNSON

September 8th, 1929
at 9a Albert Road, N.W.1.

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PART I

PART I

CHAP. I: *THE BEGINNINGS*

It was in the late autumn of 1924. I was standing in an Anglican convent and holding in my hands a book, the autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. It had been put into my hands by the Reverend Mother of the Convent to which I had been sent to take a Retreat.

I had protested, saying that that sort of book did not interest me, that I had looked into it some years before in a (Roman) Catholic shop and had come to the conclusion that it was sentimental and artificial, un-English, and that it was just another Roman Catholic scheme for exciting devotion amongst the public, and that I distrusted it. The Reverend Mother replied that I ought not to say that. So I submitted and took the book.

At that time I had been ordained and ministering in the English Church as an Anglo-Catholic for over thirteen years. I had been for ten years in an Anglican brotherhood. And yet the (Roman) Catholic Church had never presented itself as a problem to my mind. So far as I had thought of her I had regarded her as the greatest indeed of all the

Christian bodies but one which had made many and great mistakes—notably her insistence on the Papal claims. These mistakes completely separated her from the Church of England, and vaguely, I suppose, I hoped that she would one day find her proper place in the final reunion of Christendom which, however, was too far off to worry about very seriously.

Many who read this will be amazed that one could go on ministering for so many years as an Anglo-Catholic and yet never come in closer contact with the Catholic Church. But it really is a very ordinary experience. The reason is this: in the lives of most English people to-day the Catholic Church is no more than a name. In so far as she touches their lives she only does so indirectly.

To some she is a fact which only arises in times of controversy, they regard her from the point of view of convinced opponents. They are certain, whether they have thought out their position or no, that Rome is fundamentally wrong, that, by her extreme view of authority, she has sapped individual responsibility, notably in the Confessional, and has robbed the Gospel of its purity and simplicity by laying stress on unnecessary dogmas and by mediæval superstition. They would say that Rome has lost her spiritual message in her desire for worldly power, and that she is the greatest possible enemy to the soul's free access to its God. Such a point of view of course prevents any close contact with the Catholic Church.

To others she is an ecclesiastical museum—the home of ecclesiastical art, the mother of noble cathedrals whose architecture it is a joy to gaze upon; but she is essentially foreign. So far as they think of her religion they think of it as they, from time to time, have seen it expressed by foreign peoples, and they misunderstand it, think it casual, irreverent, and utterly out of touch with English ways. And so it comes to pass that they wander entranced among the beauties of the Church, yet miss her very soul.

To others, who think more deeply, she is an insoluble enigma. It seems to them as though the Catholic Church should have disappeared from history long ago: they are puzzled at her extraordinary rallying power. Persecuted and turned out of country after country, she still goes on, propped up by the Papal claims which they believe to be utterly false; she has faced more than one apparently overwhelming intellectual revolt, yet still she remains, and they cannot help but admire the amazing unity in which she holds men and women of every nation. But it goes no further, and they explain away this mysterious Church by saying to themselves that the religious instinct is common to all the human race, and exists for all time, and that the Catholic Church is merely the most highly organized expression of that instinct. Their inborn dislike of authority, and their national prejudice against anything foreign, prevent any deeper understanding. And

so for them, too, the great secret of the Catholic Church remains unsolved.

Even those who have Catholic friends do not get much further. They accept them as Roman Catholics, and assume that they will observe certain religious duties and refrain from doing certain things which others do. They may, from time to time, be conscious that their Catholic friends understand much more about their religion, and that it means more to them, than is the case with those who belong to the Church of England. But if, for a moment, they are impressed by this, they will say to themselves: "Yes, but it's mainly a religion of fear, fear of the priest who makes excessive use of his authority, and plays upon men and women's sense of duty. Whereas the essence of religion is freedom. Men and women should be free to go to Church because they feel like it and not merely because they are told to."

If there is one section of the English people to-day whom we should expect to understand and have an intimate knowledge of the Catholic Church it would be the Anglo-Catholics. They teach many doctrines in common with her, they read many of her devotional books, and, to a certain extent, they study her theology; yet they are, generally speaking, as far off understanding her as anybody else.

The reason most probably is this—Anglo-Catholics have one absorbing interest, one great, overwhelming longing, and that is the regaining of England for

Our Blessed Lord through the revival of the Catholic Faith in the English Church.

In this great object are centred all their energies, all their prayers, all their sacrifices and all their hopes. They take their stand upon an interpretation of Anglican formularies which has been held by learned and pious men. They are faced with misunderstanding on all sides. They are considered disloyal by many in their own communion, they have to hear their most cherished beliefs denied and often ridiculed by their relatives and their friends. In the past they have been universally persecuted by their bishops, and the bishops to-day, with few exceptions, still do not understand them.

And yet, against overwhelming odds, they have seen their interpretation of the Anglican formularies accepted as a recognized point of view in the Church of England; and many Catholic practices, for which in the past they were persecuted, are now regularly carried out in the services of their Church.

In the midst of this great struggle it is not to be wondered at that they have but little time to think about "Rome." When she does cross their path it is mostly as the great stumbling block to unity. They may, and often do, admire her for having preserved the Faith down the ages; but in their eyes, the dogma of Papal Infallibility has closed the door to that reunion of all Christians within the Catholic Faith, which is the goal of all their hopes. In this reunion they believe the English Church to be the key, the

vital link between the Protestant bodies and Rome. But, before this can happen, Rome must change and modify her claims. To most Anglo-Catholics the Malines discussions were a step in the right direction, but hopelessly premature. The one thing is to go on doing the will of Our Blessed Lord where they are: carrying on the blessed work of the Anglo-Catholic Revival, leaving the future in the hands of God. Anglo-Catholics are still fighting with their backs to the wall, in a fellowship cemented by persecution, misunderstanding and loneliness, and anyone leaving them to join the Roman Church is regarded, even by the most generous and the most devout, as someone who, if not a traitor, has certainly let them down and, in some sense, sold the pass. The way in which anybody who goes over to Rome is misunderstood is a convincing proof of how little Anglo-Catholics understand the Catholic Church.

It is almost impossible for Catholics to appreciate the Anglo-Catholic point of view, and this adds to the stress of the Anglo-Catholic position, and makes the leaving of any of their number for the Catholic Church even harder to bear.

Generally speaking, then, to the average Englishman, the Catholic Church is no more than a name. For many reasons he is prevented from understanding her. Underneath all other reasons lies the greatest one of all—the Englishman's love of independence. No interference, least of all in religion or by a foreigner! Inbred in him, deep set in his sub-

conscious mind, is the instinct that national independence and religious independence go hand in hand. England, he maintains, will never accept an Italian-governed church. If ever he is to come into close and personal touch with the inner life of the Catholic Church, something big must happen—some tremendous jolt in his life—someone he loves dearly must "go over," something must happen to him personally which will shift him beyond national prejudice and personal misunderstanding so that he sees the Catholic Church as she really is.

But, against all this, there is another set of English people—a relatively small but steadily increasing company, by no means confined even mainly to Anglo-Catholics, but representative of all varieties of English life. They are beginning to doubt. Those who are not Anglo-Catholics are conscious of the failure of English religion generally: they are finding it inadequate for their souls' need: they don't know why, but they feel it is all wrong. They are realizing that the Catholic Religion, that religion which four hundred years ago was suppressed by penal laws severer than any other in our national history, is gradually reappearing with a vigour and a strength which they cannot explain on any human reasoning. They see that the great weakness in English religion is its endless sects and controversies, and they are conscious that the Catholics possess a unity unknown in any other society of the world. Their own national prejudices are being

weakened by the international spirit moving the world, and they feel the attraction of an international church. They see men and women whom they would least expect to do so becoming members of that Church, and they are wondering and doubting what it all means.

Amongst Anglo-Catholics also there is a little company who are growing anxious. They are beginning to realize that the difference between Anglo-Catholics and Catholics is not merely a matter of detail or degree. They are becoming conscious that Anglo-Catholicism and Catholicism are two quite different things. They see no prospect of reunion. They thought Rome might change, but now they realize she not only will not, but she cannot. The Papacy is fundamental, the very basis of all her authority and her unity. They see that, so far from the Catholic Church ever contemplating reunion, she is spending herself lavishly in money and in men, is building her own cathedrals, her churches and her schools, and gradually becoming the greatest religious force in the country.

This company of doubting and wondering souls has increased rapidly of late, and there is every sign that it will increase more rapidly in the future.

But to me, as I stood in that autumn of 1924 with the autobiography of St. Thérèse in my hand, these doubts and wonderings had not as yet occurred. I was entirely absorbed in the conversion of souls to Our Blessed Lord through the Anglo-Catholic

revival in the English Church. I had no sense whatever of insecurity, no doubts whatever as to my position. It was not till another year and a half had passed that I was to experience the beginnings of those torturing doubts and that sickening sense of fear that was gradually to fill my mind. The tremendous "jolt" had not come to me; it was to come at Lisieux, but not till eighteen months had passed.

I took the *Life of St. Thérèse* up to my room and began to read it. The first two chapters did not appeal to me at all: indeed, I found it difficult to get through them. Gradually, however, the story gripped me, and it is quite impossible to describe my state of mind when at last, long after midnight, I laid down the book. All I can say is that it moved my whole being as no other piece of writing has ever done.

Here was someone who had loved Our Lord to a degree beyond anything I had met before: a love as strong as that of the martyrs of old, and yet with the delicacy and tenderness of a little child, so delicate and tender that one almost fails to realize the furnace in which that love was so wonderfully refined. Above all else it was the Saint's gospel of suffering as being the most blessed gift by which alone we could be really united to Our Blessed Lord in unfettered love, and her interpretation of pain and suffering as something which can be offered in union with Our Blessed Lord's Cross for the sake

of the Church and for the salvation of souls—it was all this which, coming into my life when things were exceedingly difficult, lit up and made real to me certain spiritual truths towards which I was dimly groping; truths which I had been discouraged from holding as being morbid and so forth, and which I now found were the very foundations of the saintly life. For the first time I understood St. Paul's words—"I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Church" (COL. i, 24).

For over six months the study of this book pulled me through one of the most difficult passages of my life.

CHAP. II : *FIRST VISIT TO LISIEUX*

In the following May, soon after Easter, I was given the annual three weeks rest which is usual in the brotherhood to which I then belonged. A few days before my rest was due it was suggested to me by my sister that I should go on a short pilgrimage to Lisieux, and visit the home and Convent where St. Thérèse had lived. The whole thing was decided upon only at the very last moment. I naturally shrank from the journey, for I knew if I went to Lisieux I must go entirely alone, and I had never been in France before and had never spoken French since my school-days. It was all I could do to get my passport ready in time. I so very nearly did not go at all. But I went. At Havre, where the boat arrived in the early morning, I attended Mass at one of the churches. After the Mass an old priest shuffled round the church with two acolytes and a crucifix and the funniest old beadle with a cocked hat and staff in front, all of them chanting a litany in some foreign tongue. It was all so casual and offhand. I remember saying to myself: "Well, if that is Roman Catholicism, I'm glad I'm not an R.C."

The train wound its way through a lovely valley, from the window I saw the little Normandy

farms, with their orchards and apple blossom. As the train approached Lisieux I could see the Basilica of the Convent; within whose walls the Saint had prayed and loved and suffered. The moment when I looked upon it for the first time is a moment of my life which it is impossible to forget.

Arrived at Lisieux, I made my way to the hotel, small and primitive, and then set out for the Chapel of the Convent where is the Shrine of the little Saint. My first impression was one of great repulsion: it was all so foreign, sentimental and artificial. I couldn't bear the paper flowers, the festoons of paper roses. I did not learn till later in the day that these were in honour of the Canonization of the Saint which was then taking place at Rome. All unknowingly I had stumbled upon the very day of her Canonization for my first visit to her shrine. I made my way through crowds of people to the Shrine, which also did not appeal to me, said my prayers, and came away.

In the afternoon I visited the Hall of the Relics. There I saw various things which the Saint had either worn or used: the spoon and fork used by her in the refectory, the habits she had worn, her needle case, her sandals, the chair and table which she had used in her cell, the pictures she had painted, little artificial flowers which she had made as she lay dying, and, above all, her discipline of knotted cord and other methods of mortification which she had used.

It was a most moving experience to be looking upon the very things used by one who in so short a time had been raised to the Altars of the Church and was now proclaimed a Saint in every country of the world; to be treading the very streets which she had trod—trod in our own lifetime, too.

Later in the afternoon I visited her home, a charming little house set in the middle of the garden where St. Thérèse, as a child, had played. In this garden I saw the little alcove in the wall where she placed her baby altar and, at Christmas, her baby crib; the very figures which she used can still be seen. I entered the house by the room near the fireplace of which she used to place her shoes on Christmas Eve, as English children hang their stockings by their beds, and I remembered that memorable night when she did it for the last time.

Opening out of this room is another which can only be seen through a glass door. This is the room where the family had their last meal before the Saint entered the convent. In this room also is the chair in which her father used to sit and sing to her, and the little footstool on which, as a small child, she sat at her father's feet.

Upstairs is the room in which she was so desperately ill, and where she saw Our Lady's miraculous smile. In the place where her bed used to be, there is now an Altar. Finally, in another room, one is shown all her toys, her school satchel and exercise

books; her prayer desk and rosary and catechism, all kept carefully behind glass doors.

The contrast between the toys of the frail child and the discipline of the strong and full grown Saint was deeply moving, a perfect parable of the power of Divine Grace.

On my way back I visited the Cathedral of St. Pierre, and saw the Altar where the family all made their last Communion together before the Convent received the Saint within its walls. Behind the High Altar is the perfect Lady Chapel which Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, who condemned St. Joan, built as an act of reparation. At this Altar St. Thérèse used to hear her daily Mass as a girl. I summoned up courage to ask an old verger, in very broken French, if he knew the Saint personally; and he told me that he remembered her and her father very well, and that he had often received money from her.

That evening, after I had had dinner in the most obscure corner I could find, the landlady, noticing I was alone, came and talked with me for a while. She told me she used to be in the same class as St. Thérèse in the Convent school and had often sat next her in form.

So ended the first day at Lisieux, a day crowded with vivid and deep impressions, an increasing consciousness of the Supernatural and a growing sense of the nearness of the Unseen and the Saints.

The following day I was present at Mass at the

Shrine of the Saint. I again found the foreign atmosphere very difficult and could not get used to their ways at all.

In the afternoon I paid another visit to the little home of St. Thérèse, intending to read quietly in the garden. While I was reading a Belgian priest came and sat beside me and we talked for a while as best we could, for my French was very meagre. I remember the subjects of our talk were the harassing questions of Divorce and Birth Control. On rising to go we found that, being Ascension Day, the house was closed an hour earlier than usual, and the garden door was locked and barred. "Nous sommes les prisonniers de la petite Thérèse," exclaimed the Belgian priest, in great excitement. We examined the wall in vain,there was no possibility of climbing over. "Je vais chercher une échelle," said my stout little friend. By a stroke of great good luck we found the needed ladder in the toolhouse at the end of the garden, and we propped it up against the wall. But once again we were foiled, for there was nobody to whom we could appeal for help upon the other side. So my companion and I found an old tin can, in which he placed a stone and, sitting astraddle the wall, he rattled it for all he was worth. Presently neighbours began to gather round; whereupon my little companion, seated astride the wall, and waving the old tin can, shouted out at the top of his voice "Nous sommes prisonniers de la petite Thérèse, nous deux, un prêtre belge et un anglais! Vive l'Al-

liance!" Meanwhile I was cowering at the foot of the wall, terribly shy and dreading a public scene in a foreign land: finally I climbed the wall, amid great applause, and reached the ground and freedom.

It was a terribly funny incident, but its consequences were to be of far more importance than I then imagined. In consequence of the delay I arrived at the hotel late for dinner, to find the dining room flooded out with pilgrims from Rome. I was thus forced out of my solitary corner to the very middle of the room, where was the only vacant seat left. I found myself opposite an Irishman from Glasgow. He immediately got into conversation with me, and asked me to go with him on the following morning to visit the Convent cemetery and see the place where St. Thérèse had originally been buried. I replied that I was not very interested, as her body was no longer there, having been removed to the Convent Chapel. He pressed me, however, and at last I consented to go.

The way to the cemetery lies along a most lovely country lane. The over-arching trees were of a fresh young green, and spring flowers were coming up everywhere. The distant view across the valley is exquisite. It is the path along which the Saint had often passed to lay flowers on her mother's grave. We paused at this grave and said a prayer and then passed on to the Convent cemetery.

While we were there a French lady began to speak to us about the Saint and her life. She pointed

to the graves near by and said this was the Reverend Mother who received St. Thérèse into the Convent—this was her first novice mistress, and so forth. Seeing that she possessed intimate knowledge of the Convent, I asked her to tell me anything she knew about St. Thérèse. . . .

We returned to the town, accompanied by this French lady and her husband. On the way I explained to her, as I already had to my Irish companion, that I was an Anglo-Catholic. She was greatly puzzled and much interested, and said that, if I was willing, she would try and get me a private audience with the Reverend Mother of the Carmelite Convent, Mère Agnes, the elder sister of St. Thérèse. She said she feared it was not very likely, but that she would try.

We arranged to meet at a certain point an hour later. At the appointed time I was there waiting; but there was no sign of her. I had just abandoned hope and was moving off when she appeared. We had made a mistake about our rendezvous, and I very nearly missed the interview altogether. She told me she had secured an appointment, and off we went together, she acting as interpreter.

And so it came to pass that I, a complete stranger, of a different Communion, knowing nobody, and scarcely able to make myself understood, found myself kneeling in the little parlour of the Carmelite Convent, speaking with Mère Agnes—Pauline—the elder sister of St. Thérèse, kneeling where, years

before, St. Thérèse had knelt in floods of tears, talking to the same sister, "her little Mother Pauline"—listening to the same voice—after her entrance to the Convent. The interview was very short, and we spoke at the grille, with a white curtain in between. The only word I can recall is the word "abjurer," when I was told I must renounce all my false beliefs. I remember saying to myself: "Yes, that is exactly what she would say, because she understands nothing of the Catholic revival in the English Church."

Outside we met the Curé, with whom I had a short conversation. He asked me what my authority was. I replied quite cheerfully "the universal episcopate," whereupon he said, "Mais où est-il?" I remember that I could make no convincing answer but consoled myself with the thought that it was safer to be too vague rather than too definite.

The following morning I spent my last few hours in Lisieux. I paid a short visit to the Benedictine school where the Saint had been educated, and saw the Altar where she was confirmed and made her first Communion.

I then made a last visit to the little home of St. Thérèse to say a final prayer. As I entered, the Sister-in-Charge came forward and asked if I were a Catholic. I explained that I was an Anglo-Catholic. She was much interested, and then said "I want to give you a special favour." With that she unlocked the glass door, and I was allowed to enter and kneel

and say a prayer at the table where the Saint had had her last meal and to kiss the little footstool upon which she had sat. The sister took me to the other room and again opened the glass door, and I was allowed to hold the Saint's skipping-rope in my hand and kneel at her prayer-desk and kiss her catechism —a privilege the sister told me she had given to scarcely anybody.

I then had to hurry to catch my train, and my three days visit to Lisieux was over. At Trouville I had to wait, and I spent the time on the beach where St. Thérèse first saw the sea—and there I thought out the experience of those three days.

Standing out far above all else was the fact that I had been through a spiritual experience unlike anything I had ever known in my life before. Putting aside the novelty of it all, the beauty of the old town of Lisieux, its exquisite setting in the loveliness of a Normandy spring, and allowing for the fact that the Saint had died in the attractiveness of her youth, I still knew that I had been in the presence of the Supernatural as never before. The expression which the Supernatural had taken and through which it had made itself real to me was the life of St. Thérèse, a life of love for Our Blessed Lord so absolute, so complete and so consuming that it defied all human analysis and exceeded all human understanding. So stern in its renunciation that it made one afraid, yet so simple and so human in its homeliness that one was utterly unable to resist it.

It seemed to vanquish time and transcend all human ties. Earth and earthly things only counted in so far as they were in tune with Our Lord's Love for her and with her absorbing love for Him.

It was the quality of love which one had read of in the Lives of the Saints, and which one had wistfully regarded as a thing of the past. It took one straight back to the Colosseum at Rome. Here it was to-day, the same invincible supernatural love of the early martyrs, the same heroic sanctity—in our own time, in the midst of this most material age. A Supernatural love which revealed with an intensity which I had never met before, the true relation of the individual to Our Blessed Lord; the relation of the creature to its Creator, the soul to its God. That is, a relationship of utter adoration and worship, and yet at the same time of perfect union of the soul with its Saviour. Any question and doubt as to the Godhead of Our Lord Jesus Christ was impossible at Lisieux. All the wearying discussions in which Our Lord is regarded as the Great Example Who encourages us to develop the God within us were unthinkable. The Deity of Christ was flashed before my soul at Lisieux with blinding splendour. My soul drank at the pure stream of the undiluted truth of the Godhead of My Lord.

I had known it through the reading of her Life and my soul had fed upon it, yet I had rather felt she was not of this world. But here at Lisieux was the house in which she had lived, the toys with which

she had played, the things she had used and worn, the very street along which she had walked, and all this had happened within our very lifetime.

The reason why I lingered among the earthly relics of the Saint was not out of mere sentimentality, as some readers may be inclined to think, but because they were the pledge that this saintly soul was also very human—not merely a saintly tradition, but human here with us in our very day. And, as I saw them, I knew that the days of heroic sanctity were not over, a miracle of Supernatural Grace was before my eyes.

It was because I had read her life of unquenchable love for Our Blessed Lord, radiant through the greatest sufferings, physical and spiritual, and through a very painful death, that these little earthly tokens were so very precious to me.

By the power of her life and love, I had been caught up so that I had been nearer to Our Blessed Lord and had seen Him more clearly. The simple directness of her love had made the Object of that love seem very, very close. Love radiated from her shrine and gathered into a Supernatural fellowship those who knelt around. I had been where the Unseen was very, very near, and where the veil was very, very thin.

The second great fact of which I was conscious was that my visit was being guided in a mysterious way. One after the other barriers were broken down and hindrances removed without any attempt

to do so on my part. At first it seemed coincidence, and some may so interpret it even now; but as time went on I knew it was more than mere coincidence which had led me, a stranger and all unknown, to kneel in the Carmel parlour and receive the blessing of Mère Agnes, the Saint's own sister. I must believe it was the prayers of the little Saint herself.

At the same time, had I not read her Life before I went, I never should have got over the many superficial hindrances which so put me off, the foreign ways which I so disliked: and I can quite understand English people going to Lisieux and coming away without ever having learnt its secret.

The Catholic Church, as such, did not greatly attract me. I was merely conscious of an astounding spiritual experience for which I was intensely grateful to Our Blessed Lord. It did not give me any desire to become a Catholic or any thought that I should do so: on the contrary when, returning on the boat, I read in the paper of some incomprehensibly uncharitable statement by a certain Anglican Bishop concerning the Blessed Sacrament, it merely made me long for the day when all that I had seen at Lisieux, the devotion to Our Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament, would be the very life and breath of the Church of England. It made me resolve more than ever to spend myself to that great end.

So I returned to my ministry, intending, if I could, to return to Lisieux another year.

CHAP. III : *SECOND VISIT*

THE year passed quickly, filled with active ministry of every description: the experience of Lisieux always at the back of my mind. To this experience I returned continually to refresh my soul. At times I had vague misgivings as to why I had never met anything like it in the Church of England, but I met them quite easily with the answer that it was only a matter of time, and, with the growth of Anglo-Catholicism, the same thing would be possible in the Church of England. We were rebuilding the waste places, and that was sufficient for me! Mainly, my attitude was one of great gratitude for having been allowed such an experience and a desire to test its reality by a second visit.

And so, in the following May of 1926, I paid my second visit. The scene was the same. Outwardly everything was just as before, and yet everything was different. The Saint had retired entirely into the background—and I found my whole mind focussed not on the Saint herself, but upon one all-absorbing point—"What was it that had made such a life possible? What was it that had produced Thérèse?"

Hitherto I had always taken it for granted that it

was the personal Faith of the Saint and her complete response to Our Lord and His Divine Will, even in the darkest moments. But now I had to ask myself what I meant by the word Faith. Brought up in Anglicanism, with its inevitable vagueness and its fear of precise definition in spiritual things, I had never defined it. So far as I had thought it out, it meant to me the capacity to believe in certain spiritual truths which, though I could not prove them, were not contrary to my reason; a capacity to cling on to one's belief in the goodness of God and the ultimate triumph of truth in the midst of confusion in matters of belief, and to cling on to Christian standards in the midst of overwhelming difficulties in the question of morals.

But here, in the case of St. Thérèse, I knew I was faced with something quite different, something far more definite and of far greater force. She had indeed the capacity to cling on by Faith in the darkest moments and to believe things beyond her reason; but she had all this in a unique degree because, behind and beneath it all, was a supernatural certainty in those Divine truths which she knew had been revealed and which she never for one moment doubted or questioned. These truths she did not question: not because her reason led her to believe in them, but because they were taught by an authority outside her which she knew to possess a divinely given authority which could never err or contradict itself in matters of faith. And it

was because she was resting on this foundation that, free from endless controversies, her soul was able to grow and develop in such a marvellous way.

I had always regarded such certainty in matters of Faith as something impossible in this world and not even to be desired; because it could only be achieved at the expense of character and intellect, and by crippling all sincerity and growth; held that thinking things out for oneself was the condition of character.

And yet here I was faced with the fact that it was precisely this certainty coming to St. Thérèse from an objective authority outside her which had produced the most intelligently saintly life I had known.

But more than this, St. Thérèse did not possess the certainty by herself alone; it was shared by every individual within her Church. This was one of the facts, I began to see, which had given Lisieux its astounding spiritual quality. At Lisieux were gathered people of all nations from every part of the world, all perfectly at ease with one another because perfectly one in their belief. Such a unity in matters of Faith among people from all parts of the world, I was gradually learning, could not be of man's devising. It was not that each one had worked out his own idea of the Christian Religion, and that they had all happened to agree, but it was because they all believed in a definite authority which they knew to be supernatural and divine, to which they gave an unhesitating and loving obedi-

ence. And this authority was not a crippling, mutilating thing, but was creative and productive in the highest degree possible.

I began to see that to me Faith was mainly the result of my own reason. I accepted what I could not prove, provided it did not contradict my reasoning.

Whereas to St. Thérèse Faith was belief in certain truths because they had been revealed to and taught by a Teacher outside her which had divine authority and therefore the right to claim her absolute obedience.

To me the centre of Faith lay in myself. To her it lay in the Church. To me, according to the theories I held then, her view of Faith seemed rather irrational, and yet, with Lisieux before me, I knew it was not so.

I had not as yet realized the close relationship between reason and authority; that it is the function of reason to guide us to where the divine authority rests, and that the authority itself must be able to meet the challenge of reason, one of God's greatest gifts to man, or else cease to exist, for only truth can prevail.

But at the moment I was only dimly groping towards the Catholic definition of Faith: "Faith is a supernatural gift of God which enables us to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed."

"Whatever God has revealed."

Where was God's revelation to be found, and where was the authority empowered to carry out the gigantic trust of guarding this revelation and teaching it to humanity all down the ages? Where lay the source of this authority, calling for such supernatural obedience? Where was the centre of this supernatural unity? There was only one answer. At last, for the first time in my life, I found myself face to face with the Papacy as the greatest spiritual force in human life. Hitherto I had never examined the Papal claims closely. I regarded it as indeed a great power, but a power mainly of human contrivance. Rome had been the centre of the world, and had gradually assumed the control of ecclesiastical affairs. Temporal power and astute diplomacy at the Vatican had slowly built up an invincible position, often by very questionable methods. Some nations had had the courage to assert their spiritual independence, and nearly half the Christian world rejected the Papal claims. And there I had left it.

But now I realized that such an immense body as the Catholic Church could not be kept together, human nature being what it is, unless the centre of unity was of divine origin. And now I began to see a further fact; namely, that this inner unity of Faith was the secret of the wonderful external and visible unity of the Catholic Church. I had always suspected the outward unity of the Catholic Church as

an unreal superficial unity forced upon people by authority from above, an iron system silencing all original thought, shutting out light and air, a system in which the individual was completely crushed—a unity of organization and not of spirit. I now knew that I could no longer so easily believe this. At Lisieux it was shown to me clearly that the secret of the external unity was to be found in the spiritual unity of the Faith. The more I thought about this the more obvious it became that the marvellous external unity of the Catholic Church, holding in one absolute obedience souls from every quarter of the world, could never have come about, still less existed longer than any other kingdom, on any foundation which was not supernatural and divine. The Catholic Church was one because her Faith was one, nor could the unity of the Faith be preserved in the face of the independence of the human intellect unless the authority was divine.

Again, the fact that at least half the Christian world accepted this authority and jealously guarded this unity was, I could see, far more impressive than the other half, which had split up into endless sects, at war not only with the Catholic Church, but with one another.

For a week I pondered these questions in my mind in the lanes and fields round Lisieux and argued this way and that, but in the end I knew that I could

never again rest until this question of authority and unity had been settled.

Did Our Blessed Lord intend His Church to be a teaching church, possessing this absolute authority, teaching one Faith, and demanding this complete obedience from men? Did He intend that His Church should be visibly one? And did He mean that St. Peter and his successors were to be the final authority and the centre of unity for His Church?

I knew I could not be honest unless I faced this question. I shrank from it with all my being, for, if the Roman Catholic claim proved to be right, I knew that every step I took was bound to tear my whole life up by the roots, destroy my apparent usefulness, cause endless pain and dismay to many souls whom I loved more dearly than words could say, and lead me right out into loneliness and the fear of the unknown.

But at that moment I was not at all convinced, and did not think it could be possible that Our Lord could claim such an upheaval. All I knew at the moment was that I had got to study and read my New Testament over again with these three questions foremost in my mind—Authority—Unity—Peter.

I cannot describe the sense of loneliness and helplessness with which I left Lisieux this second time. Helplessness, for I was ill equipped for such a

gigantic task upon which so many issues hung, and loneliness because nothing is more misunderstood by even the closest of friends than "serious Roman difficulties."

And so, with a very anxious heart, I turned to my New Testament, and the next part contains the story of what I found there.

PART II

PART II

CHAP. IV: *AUTHORITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT*

To the average Englishman the question of any authority in his religion hardly ever occurs. He accepts that aspect of the Church of England's teaching in which he has been brought up, either Anglo-Catholic, Broad, or Evangelical, and follows it until it either fails to satisfy his needs or else comes into conflict with his own personal views about God and Religion.

He then, being essentially honest and sincere and not desiring to profess more than he really believes, discards all that he cannot accept and evolves a personal religion of his own.

About this religion, so formed, he is intensely reserved, and, if questioned about it, he would say with complete conviction that religion to him was a matter entirely between God and the soul, that each man must find it out for himself and do his best to live up to it, that, if he had to label himself, he was of course Church of England, but that he did not

wish to ally himself with any particular party and would always treat all religion with respect. In taking up this attitude he would be extremely modest and diffident.

But the moment there is any suggestion of an ecclesiastical Authority which has the power to guide a man's religion and to say quite definitely what he ought or ought not to believe, and what he ought or ought not to do, an authority which at times will make demands upon him which will be against his own personal judgments, then at once he becomes restive and anxious.

He is filled with very definite fears of being asked to surrender his independence of conscience to another man, and he tells himself how grossly the power of the Priesthood was abused in mediæval times. He also feels subconsciously that all this fear is bound up with that sturdy independence which is the characteristic of the English nation and has been the source of its greatness; and, if pressed beyond a certain limit, the modest and diffident Englishman will put up the stiffest fight possible for his independence in religion. He will do this not because he desires a fight but because of his deepest conviction that that independence, which he prizes above all else in national affairs, is even more vital in things which concern a man's soul. Without this independence men become partizans; narrow followers of narrow sects, intolerant and controversial, and lose that liberality of outlook

which is specially English and specially needed in these modern times.

This attitude of mind is strengthened by the fact that amongst an increasing number of men there is a growing doubt at the back of their minds as to whether the Gospels are really reliable; whether the Christian religion is authoritative for all the world; and whether we can really know what Our Lord's teaching actually was. They would hesitate before saying that they believed Our Lord to be truly God. To them Jesus Christ is the great, broad-minded teacher, basing everything on the love of God and the love of our fellow-men. What more could you want? To be more definite is dangerous.

In this atmosphere it is obvious that Authority can have no real place. Where all is so vague nobody can claim to speak with authority.

Now this shrinking from any definite ecclesiastical Authority pervades all religion in the Church of England to-day. In Evangelical and Broad Church circles it is obvious, but it also exists among the Anglo-Catholics, who sincerely desire a measure of Church Authority. For their desire is mainly for an authority which will give a backing to certain doctrines, which by their individual intellect and judgment they have come to accept. Therefore, if that authority should conflict at any point with that judgment and intellect, it would cease to have any weight. Such a view of authority leaves room for independence and private judgment. But Catholics

accept the authority of the Church because they believe it to be divinely ordained authority to which they give absolute submission; knowing that even in those doctrines which seem unacceptable to their intellect and judgment, the Church will in the end be found to be right, because she is the Divinely ordained teacher of truth. This view of authority leaves no room for private judgment. It was not until I came face to face with the Authority of the Catholic Church as I saw it at Lisieux; absolute and unbending, demanding in the Name of Our Lord a complete submission of the individual; it was not till then that I realized how different this was from the Anglo-Catholic conception.

I found myself recoiling from it, filled with doubts and fears. Surely such an extreme view of authority was unnecessary, crippling to human intellect and social progress: surely it meant the suicide of individuality. Above all, surely this was utterly unlike the Mind of Our Blessed Lord in the Gospels, and yet I could not get away from the conviction that there was something supernatural in this Authority, though I distrusted and feared it so much.

And so in this frame of mind I turned to the Gospels; hardly believing that they could support this view of authority; and yet half fearing that they might.

CHAP. V : *THE AUTHORITY OF OUR LORD IN THE GOSPELS*

In turning to the Gospels to see what they taught about Authority, I found that, so far from being vague and undefined, it was most clear and most decided. If we turn to St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke we find that it runs throughout them all.

At the very opening of His ministry Our Blessed Lord is shown to us as a Person Who teaches with a unique authority:

"And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings the people were astonished at His doctrine for He taught them as one having authority and not as the Scribes" (MATT. vii, 28, 29).

"And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves saying What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits and they do obey Him" (MARK i, 27).

"And they were astonished at His doctrine, for His word was with power" (LUKE iv, 32).

"And many hearing Him were astonished saying From whence hath this Man these things? And what

wisdom is this which is given unto Him?" (MARK vi, 2).

With His own lips Our Blessed Lord claims that this authority is greater than all that has gone before; and that it is supernatural and eternal:

"It was said by them of old time . . . . but I say unto you" (MATT. v, 21).

"Heaven and earth shall pass away but My Words shall not pass away" (MATT. xxiv, 35).

No wonder that His enemies were afraid of Him and dared not question Him:

"They feared Him, because all the people was astonished at His doctrine" (MARK xi, 18).

"No man after that durst ask Him any question" (MARK xii, 34).

So definite was the authority with which Our Lord spoke and acted that it drove His enemies to a direct challenge. The chief priests asked Him "By what authority doest Thou these things, and who gave Thee this authority?"

Finally Our Lord Himself, with His own lips, claims absolute and complete authority both in Heaven and Earth:

"All authority is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth" (MATT. xxviii, 18). "All things are delivered to Me of My Father" (LUKE x, 22).

In these passages we see Our Blessed Lord as Someone Who speaks with an authority unlike any other, an authority so clear and definite that everybody recognized it. His friends marvelled at it; His enemies were driven to challenge it and were reduced to silence and fear, being utterly unable to answer Him. Lastly, Our Blessed Lord claims for His words a permanence which extends beyond time and space, and deliberately tells us that He possesses all authority, not only on earth but in Heaven as well.

When we turn to St. John's Gospel, the evidence is even clearer. Our Lord definitely claims that this authority comes direct from God the Father:

"I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of Myself but He sent Me" (JOHN viii, 42).

"My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (John VII, 16).

"He Whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His Hand" (St. John iii, 34).

"The Father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (JOHN v, 22).

And because His teaching comes from God the Father, therefore it is the Truth:

"But now ye seek to kill Me, a Man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God" (JOHN viii, 40).

"If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (JOHN viii, 31).

In the final discourses before the Passion, spoken to His twelve Apostles, He states deliberately, "I am the Truth" (John XIV, 6).

Above all, in order it seems that there should be no possible mistake, He makes this claim again before Pilate at one of the most crucial moments of the Passion:

"For this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the Truth" (JOHN xviii, 37).

Thus the Gospel picture of Our Lord is not merely the picture of One Who loved all men with a Love greater than any other love this world has ever seen, but of One Who also spoke with a unique Authority, claiming to be a Teacher of a Divine revelation given Him from God the Father, a revelation which therefore all men must listen to and obey because it is the Truth. Heaven and Earth may pass, but His teaching will remain because it is the Truth.

Our Lord always taught that the true love of humanity must always go hand in hand with an answering love of truth. The two things in fact are

the same; and indeed it must be so, for love which is not founded on truth is merely sentimentalism and weakness, lacking that element of sacrifice and surrender without which it is not love, but self-indulgence.

Let us now face this. We are confronted with the most overwhelming fact in the history of the human race—God Himself has, as a matter of history, come down to earth—not just a great teacher or a great prophet, but God Himself, in the Person of Jesus Christ, has lived amongst men. Why? In order to reveal to mankind the Truth about God and the Truth about mankind—and to show man the method of his salvation.

When Our Lord Jesus Christ speaks it is God speaking. It follows then that His teaching is the whole Truth and carries with it the whole Authority of God. This teaching clearly can never change, for Truth cannot contradict itself. It cannot belong to any one people alone; it belongs to the whole of the human race. When God speaks the whole of mankind must listen and obey. If a man comes face to face with this Divine Teacher and wilfully rejects His teaching, he is condemned.

And yet this Teacher is no mere arbitrary Judge. He is the greatest Lover of humanity the world has ever known. He has held the heart of the world captive ever since He came amongst men.

But His love is not a weak, sentimental love, giving way to human weakness, but a strong and vigorous love. And when men wanted it to be

untrue to Truth, it gave itself by dying for the Truth; as all real Love must, for Love and Truth can never be opposed.

The most perfect revelation of Truth is the Divine Love dying for Truth's sake on the Cross.

But at this point someone may very fairly say: "If this is true, we are faced with a gigantic fact; but how do we know that the Gospels are a reliable record? May not the Evangelists or the translators have made mistakes, can we be really sure of what Our Lord actually did say?"

The next chapter will be devoted to the answer to this question. At the moment all we will say is that the Gospels depend for their authority upon the authority of the Society which produced them. If the Scripture records are true and inspired, it is because the original Christian Society, the Catholic Church, which drew them up and sanctioned their publication, was herself divinely inspired and had Divine Authority to do so.

And this Catholic Church, by her tradition and teaching, has always taught, from the very earliest times, that Jesus of Nazareth is God and Man—a truth which she has enshrined for ever in her Creeds.

"Jesus Christ, The Only Begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds . . . . Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made. Being of one Substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made. Who for us men . . . came down from Heaven . . . . and was made Man."

CHAP. VI: *THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH IN THE GOSPELS*

How are we to know whether all this is true? We have seen in the Gospel record that Our Blessed Lord is both God and Man—Perfect God and Perfect Man. When Our Lord speaks, it is God speaking. When He teaches, it is the whole Truth; and His teaching carries with it the whole Authority of God, and those who hear must obey it. He clearly claimed to be God; this claim was recognized by foes and friends alike. He was put to death because of this claim, and He rose from the grave to prove His claim to be true. But how are we to know that this gigantic thing has really happened? Before we accept such a tremendous fact we must be sure of our ground. How are we to know that the Gospel narratives are correct? Did Our Lord really make this claim? Are the teachings recorded in the Gospels really true? The Gospels were written some years after He had left this world. What happened in between? Did Our Lord's Authority cease when He ascended or did He leave some means by which it should be continued down the ages? If so, where is it? The reliability of the Gospels must depend upon some such authority.

Let us examine the Gospels once more. In them we find that Our Lord had handed His Authority on to His Apostles, who were to be the founders of His Church, and that Church was to be the shrine of His Divine Authority to the end of time. Let us look at the passages in which Our Lord gives this great Commission to His Church. Each Gospel records this Commission:

"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations . . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (MATT. xxviii, 18).

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (MARK xvi, 15).

"Behold I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (LUKE xxiv, 49).

"As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this He breathed on them and saith unto them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose so ever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them and whose so ever sins ye retain they are retained" (JOHN xx, 21).

Here we see that the Church is sent forth into the world with an authority Supernatural and Divine; an authority which is absolute, and which flows from Our Blessed Lord Himself, Who is Supreme in heaven and in earth. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore."

Our Lord sends His Church with a Mission which He identifies with nothing less than the Mission with which He Himself had been sent into the world by the Father. "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." Could anything be clearer, more solemn, or more direct? Our Lord goes on to make it perfectly clear what this Mission is; it is nothing less than to teach to the whole world the whole Truth as He had taught it to them.—"Go ye and teach all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Think for a moment of the immensity of the task—A little company of uneducated and ignorant Jews, men who had hardly been outside their own country, entrusted with the teaching of the Supreme Revelation of God to Man; and this Revelation they are to teach to the whole world. They will have to meet the varying temperaments of the different nations and learn their languages; and they will have to commend their Gospel to the great philosophers of Athens, Corinth and Rome.

It is a task clearly quite impossible and utterly

beyond their powers; unless they are given some supernatural guidance which shall protect them from any fundamental error; and unless they know that they possess this supernatural guidance. How else could they have confidence to teach, and how else would anybody be won to accept their teaching?

This supernatural guidance Our Blessed Lord promised on two occasions. One occasion was when He gave them their great Commission, in St. Matthew's Gospel, and ended by promising them His protecting and guiding Presence till the end of the world. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

The second occasion was during the solemn discourse to His Apostles after the Last Supper:

"I will pray The Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth" (JOHN xiv, 16).

"The Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (JOHN xiv, 26).

"When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth" (JOHN xvi, 13).

This promise, which He had made in the discourse after the Last Supper, He repeated in the most dramatic manner and with the utmost em-

phasis just before His Ascension, when He said to His Apostles:

"Behold I send the promise of My Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (LUKE xxiv, 49.)

It is difficult to see how Our Lord could have been more definite or more precise on this great point. If Christianity is the Revelation of God, committed to human men to teach and to guard till the end of time in the face of human nature as we know it, it seems that some such infallible guidance is essential.

That this infallibility, this protection from error, was given to the Apostles by Our Lord is doubly proved by Our Lord's terrific words in St. Mark:

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth . . . . shall be saved, but he that believeth not *shall be condemned.*"

What Society can dare to say that anyone who believes its teaching will be saved and that anyone who wilfully disbelieves will be condemned unless that Society is certain that it has a Divine Revelation committed to its charge by God Himself, and that it has been given an infallible guidance in the teaching of it? Again, what power would such a Society's condemnation carry if men did not realize that it was divinely guided?

So far, then, the Gospel records tell us that Our Lord committed all His Authority to His Apostles, commanded them to teach the whole Truth to the whole world, and promised that He would protect them from all error to the end of time: so that they should command the obedience of men, and so that all who wilfully destroyed their authority would be condemned.

And this Authority, though definite, was not to be inconsistent with the highest possible degree of love. In the discourse after the Last Supper, St. John tells us how Our Lord, Who gave such authority to His Church, commanded them with the greatest earnestness to love one another as He had loved them:

"As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My Love" (JOHN xv, 9).

"This is My Commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you" (JOHN xv, 12).

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (JOHN xv, 13).

"A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (JOHN xiii, 34).

Love and Authority go hand in hand in the

Gospels; there is never a suggestion that there is any conflict between the stern commands of Our Divine Lord and His tender Love for mankind: nor is there any hint that the sometimes stern authority of His Church will be contrary to that Church's tender love for the human race.

The love of Our Lord, shining from the Cross, demands obedience: the love of the Catholic Church, breathing in her creeds, demands obedience too. It has been left for this modern age to invent a weak, sentimental love which is afraid to demand obedience, and therefore breaks up Society and the home.

OUR LORD'S PRAYER FOR HIS CHURCH.

But this is not all that Scripture tells us of the Church. In the seventeenth chapter of St. John, Our Blessed Lord reveals to us what was lying closest to His Heart concerning His Apostles and the Church of which they were to be the foundation. They are very precious words, for they are the last words spoken by Him in the presence of all His Apostles before His Death. Here we are deliberately given an insight into the Divine Mind, and into the depths of the Divine Purpose and Wisdom. What is the heart of the whole chapter? Unity: Unity both internal and external. It is a prayer for the Apostles and all their needs, culminating in a prayer that they may be one with a unity visible to all the world.

THE APOSTLES' BELIEF IN OUR LORD'S GODHEAD.

In the opening of the prayer Our Lord reveals that the supreme fact in His Mind with regard to His Apostles is that they are the men given unto Him by the Father, to whom He had shewn the full Revelation of that Father:

"I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world" (JOHN xvii, 6).

To them He has given the words which the Father had given Him; and as a result they had believed and known surely that He had come forth from His Father. That is to say they believed in His Divine Mission and Godhead:

"I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me" (JOHN xvii, 8).

Having mentioned this central truth, namely His Godhead, and their belief in it, He then goes on to pray for something which could only spring from such a belief, He prays that His Apostles may be one with a unity as real as the Unity in the Godhead Itself:

"Holy Father, keep through Thine Own Name

those Whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are" (JOHN xvii, 11).

THE APOSTLES' CONFLICT WITH THE WORLD.

He then passes on to say that this word, the truth of His Godhead, will be the dividing line between the Church and the world:

"I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (JOHN xvii, 14).

But at the same time Our Lord shews that this belief in His Godhead will be the very foundation of their holiness:

"Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth" (JOHN xvii, 17).

Thus far we see that Our Lord's main thought was that His Apostles believed in the truth of His Divine Mission, His supernatural claim to be God the Son: that this belief in His Godhead, which Our Lord calls the truth, was to have two results. First, it was to separate them from the world because it was a definitely supernatural belief, not of this world. It is very important to notice that thus early Our Lord had foretold that the true faith as to His Personality would mean enmity with the world and not compromise. Secondly, it was to be the very source of their supernatural holiness. Our Lord

prays that this belief may result in a unity among the Apostles as real as the unity within the Godhead itself.

And now we come to the culminating point in this great prayer. This unity among the Apostles was to continue down the ages amongst all who should believe in their word, all who should follow the Apostolic Faith, and it was to be an inner and spiritual unity which was to have, as its outward and visible sign, an external unity. And this external unity was to be so clear and definite that it would lead the outside world of non-believers to the conviction that such a unity could only spring from a Divine origin, could only have been founded by God:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word: that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (JOHN xvii, 20).

Before I had been to Lisieux, I had always regarded external unity as a thing almost impossible in this world, and as a thing to be suspected, a thing almost inevitably forced upon people from outside, and that all that really mattered was a spiritual unity.

At Lisieux all this had been shaken, because I had seen there an external unity so wonderful that I knew its origin must be supernatural. It is the

essential outcome of the union of His Church with Himself, and can no more be broken than that unity can be.

And now, in the Gospels, I found that this was exactly what Our Lord had meant His Church to be. Texts which, all unconsciously, I had slurred over in the past were now lit up with new meaning.

"That they may be one in Us, that the world may believe." In a flash I saw that in the Divine Mind of my Master, unity, internal and external, must go hand in hand: and that therefore the external unity of His Church would only be possible if it was founded on the interior unity of the Church with the Godhead through her Union with her Divine Lord. Again, that lacking that unity of Faith, the Church must fail in that function of a teaching Church which Our Lord had intended her to fulfil. And again that that internal unity wherever it really existed, could not but express itself in an external unity in a Sacramental world such as this. My whole position as a Sacramentalist was based upon the belief that Spirit expresses itself through outward signs. Clearly then the spiritual unity of the Church must express itself sacramentally in an external unity.

So then the external unity is essential because it is the result of the Church's union with her Lord and God, and her Lord and God is One. You can no more divide the Church than you can divide her Lord.

It is difficult to describe what a complete revolution this created in my mind. Henceforth I knew I could never be really happy in my theory of a visibly divided Church, more especially as Our Lord does not make this prayer for unity once only, but He repeats it and with fuller details; shewing that, in His Mind, the perfection of His Church would lie in her unity, internal and external:

"That they may be one, even as We are One; I in them and Thou in Me, *that they may be made perfect in one;* and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me" (JOHN xvii, 22-23).

And in this second Prayer He tells us that this unity of His Church is to lead non-believers in the world to realize the Godhead of the Church's Founder, and also to recognize in this unity a mark of God's Love for His Church.

So, if we gather up all that the Gospels tell us about the Church, we find that she is the Society founded by Our Blessed Lord upon His Apostles. She is given authority by Our Lord Himself to teach the whole world the full and complete Truth, as He had taught it to them. They are to carry this Truth unto all nations. This Truth will always be essentially the same because Truth cannot contradict itself. He promises them the infallible guidance of His Holy Spirit to guide them into all Truth, and this gives His Church the power to demand obedi-

ence from all men, so that all men who wilfully reject her teaching will be condemned.

The central truth is the Divine Mission and Godhead of Our Blessed Lord. He tells His Church that it will bring them into conflict with the world, with which there can be no compromise. And this belief in the Deity of Our Lord is the very foundation of the Church's supernatural holiness.

Finally, the union of the Church with the life of the Godhead is to shew itself in an external and visible unity which shall be so striking that the non-believing world will be led by it to a belief in the Godhead of that Church's Founder, and will realize it as a mark of God's Love for His true Church.

Here, then, we have our answer to the question raised at the end of the last chapter. "How are we to know that the Gospel records are true?"

The Gospels point us to their origin; the Church of the Apostles founded by Our Lord; the Society of men to whom He has revealed His Deity and to whom He entrusted the task of teaching that fact and all that flows from it to the end of time. To that Society He gave a definite Divine guidance so that they should not err in teaching this truth.

The Gospels are the product of that Church: written by her members and finally sanctioned for publication by her authority.

All that we find in the Gospels about the Deity of Our Blessed Lord and about His Church is there

because it already existed in this Church which Our Lord had founded. It could not have found its place in the Gospels if it had not already had its recognized place in the teaching of the Church; the Church which was promised the Divine guidance to save her from error.

In the next chapters we will trace the development of this Church in the Acts and in the Epistles.

CHAP. VII : *THE CHURCH IN THE ACTS*

In tracing the development of the Church in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles, we must remember that the Acts does not profess to be a complete account of the activities of all the Apostles, scattered as they were among the different nations. It is a very brief sketch of the beginnings of the Church.

The Epistles again are letters written from time to time to meet particular needs in different parts of the Church. Though they are not primarily written for historical purposes, yet they throw great light on the inner life of the Church. They deal mainly with the same period of the Church's history which is covered by the Acts: that is to say, the first thirty years after the Ascension.

THE ACTS

The story of the Infant Church opens in the first two chapters of the Acts with a very beautiful account of Our Lord's last days with His Apostles, whom He had chosen to be the founders of that Church. St. Luke, the writer of the Acts, tells us how Our Blessed Lord had, through the Holy Ghost, given definite commands "unto the Apostles whom

He had chosen." He tells us how over a period of forty days Our Lord had shewed them proofs of His Resurrection so convincing that they could not be disputed, and how He also told them many things concerning the future of His Church:

"To whom also He shewed Himself alive after His Passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (ACTS i, 3).

The last words of St. John's Gospel tell us that "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (JOHN xxi, 25).

If we think over these two passages carefully we shall see that Our Lord did many things and gave many instructions to His Apostles which were known only to them, and were not included in Holy Scripture. It is most important to realize that Holy Scripture deliberately relates that the Apostles were the possessors of these unrecorded teachings. It is these teachings which were the sacred tradition which the Apostles commanded to be handed down, and which were the foundation of the Catholic Faith, which later found expression in the Church's Creeds.

The story then goes on to say how Our Lord gathered them all together and told them to wait in

Jerusalem for the "promise of the Father which, saith He, ye have heard of Me": and how He told them that they were soon to be baptized with the Holy Ghost. His Apostles ask Him if He is going to restore the earthly kingdom to Israel, and He replies by saying again: Wait till the Holy Ghost is come upon you "and ye shall be witnesses to Me . . to the uttermost part of the earth."

We are then given a little picture of the Apostles, all of whom are mentioned individually by name, waiting in Prayer, with certain women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and His Brethren.

Thus in the opening account we see once more what is Our Lord's intention for His Church. It is to be His Society, founded by Himself and built upon His Apostles. These Apostles He has instructed personally concerning Himself and His Teaching. They are to be the sole trustees of this Teaching and they are to teach it to the whole world. But, before they do this, they must wait till they are given power to do it by a special Gift of God which Our Lord calls the Holy Ghost. This Holy Ghost is to be the Supernatural Guide which will guard them from error in their teaching.

So they wait for the Holy Ghost. At last the great event comes to pass. Ten days after the Ascension, while they are all together, the Holy Ghost comes down upon them; and they receive the miraculous gift of tongues to enable them to become the teachers of the world. And, having thus received her Baptism,

the Church immediately starts upon her Mission to teach the Truth of the Incarnation, the Deity of Her Lord, and all that flows from it, to the whole wide world. Let us follow her as she goes upon her way.

THE CHURCH IS SUPERNATURALLY GUIDED

The first thing we notice is that, from the very outset, the Church owes its power and its inspiration to the Holy Spirit. She is a supernaturally guided Society. Her wisdom is from above and is not of this world, in fact it brings her in direct conflict with it—and the Holy Spirit is not a vague, subjective belief, but a very definite, objective fact. It guides the Church corporately as a Society, and It guides and inspires individuals as well.

THE CORPORATE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

The Holy Spirit bursts upon the Church on a definite day, the fiftieth day after the Resurrection; it takes quite definite and visible form, that of tongues of fire, and has this definite tangible result, that all the Apostles begin to speak in the tongues of foreign nations, and representatives of those foreign nations hear and understand them as they speak.

He shows Himself acting in the corporate life of the Church, and seems to be taken quite naturally and causes no great comment:

"When they had prayed, the place was shaken

where they were assembled together: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (ACTS iv, 31).

After the Conversion of St. Paul we are told: "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied" (ACTS ix, 31).

It was by the Holy Spirit that the Church in Antioch was guided to send forth Barnabas and Saul:

"As they ministered to the Lord and fasted the Holy Ghost said 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them' " (ACTS xiii, 2).

Above all, in the first great Council of the Church at Jerusalem, when the Apostles and Elders came together to make a decision affecting the very foundation of the Faith and the whole future of the Church, when any mistake would have been fatal, the Apostles emerge from the trial calm and serene, and preface the results of their deliberations with the tremendous words "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (ACTS xv, 28).

INDIVIDUAL LIVES

In the opening sermon after Pentecost we are told: "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said. . ."

When it was necessary to ordain seven deacons, the one great point insisted upon by the Apostles was that they should be men filled with the Holy Ghost:

"Wherefore look ye out seven men full of the Holy Ghost" (ACTS vi, 3).

At the martyrdom of St. Stephen we are told: "Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven" (ACTS vii, 55) and St. Barnabas is described as "a good man and full of the Holy Ghost."

These are but a few out of countless instances, all of which show us the Church as a Supernatural Society: not of this world; guided supernaturally by the Holy Spirit both in its corporate and individual life. It was this fact which gave such serene confidence to its friends, and was such a baffling mystery to its enemies.

THE CHURCH SPEAKS WITH AUTHORITY

As the immediate result of the coming of the Holy Ghost the Church underwent a complete psychological transformation. The same Apostles who, just before the Resurrection, had been hiding in an upper room for fear of the Jews now go forth dauntless, fearless of all opposition, and claim the right and the power to teach the world. The crowds were awed by their speaking, the High Priest and the

Sanhedrin listened astonished and amazed. "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled" (ACTS iv, 13).

Listen to St. Peter's first sermon. He arises and speaks in an entirely new tone: he speaks with authority, there is no vagueness, no compromise:

"Ye men of Judæa and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you and hearken to my words. . . Ye men of Israel, hear these words" (ACTS ii, 14, 22).

The Apostles spoke with an authority which demanded obedience. At the end of St. Peter's sermon his hearers say "What shall we do?" St. Peter replies "Repent and be baptized." And we are told—"They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine" (ACTS ii, 42). Again, on another occasion, we are told that "a great company of the Priests were obedient to the Faith."

So the Acts shows us the Apostles, unlettered, ignorant men, speaking with an authority which silenced the leaders of the Sanhedrin, and demanding an obedience to their faith and doctrine to which even some of the Priests submitted.

It is not merely that we see the Church speaking with authority to her own members, her own children. A dispute arises as to how the Gentile converts are to be treated. The Apostles and Elders meet to decide the question at Jerusalem,

and they give their decision, as we have seen, in the solemn words "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (ACTS xv, 28).

St. Luke then tells us how the decisions of the Council were sent out to the different cities. "And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep that were ordained of the Apostles and Elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the Faith" (ACTS xvi, 4).

Thus we see the Church teaching the world outside her and governing her members within her by an authority not of this world, but supernatural and divine. And as the Church progresses, we notice a certain something appearing under varying names: sometimes it is called "the Apostles' Doctrine," at others "the Apostles' decrees," or else simply "the Faith." We must now see what this doctrine or faith was.

THE GODHEAD AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

There is nothing more thrilling in the story of the infant Church than the triumphant way in which the Apostles teach the Godhead and Resurrection of Our Blessed Lord. It is the culminating point in every sermon, they proclaim it on every possible occasion, never for a moment do they hesitate or compromise, they are fearless in the face of opposition, and they seal it with their dying breath. It is

the foundation of all their hopes, the source of all their power.

The importance of the Resurrection is obvious at once. The burden of St. Peter's first public utterance at the appointment of Matthias was this—"one must be ordained to be a witness with us of His Resurrection."

Let us recall the scene at Pentecost. The Holy Ghost has just descended upon the Apostles and they are speaking in foreign tongues, round them is gathered a multitude. At first the crowd is amazed and looks on in awed wonder, then the inevitable happens and the superficial members of the crowd begin to ridicule them, saying these men are drunken and filled with new wine. In the midst of this setting, St. Peter rises up and, with passionate fervour, tells them the reason of it all:

"Jesus of Nazareth . . . ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain . . . This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore . . . He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear" (ACTS ii, 22, 23, 33).

Think who it is to whom St. Peter is speaking. He is speaking to the very men who, less than two months before, had been clamouring for His Master's death, who had lined the very streets along which He had carried His Cross, and, standing there, where His Master had so often stood before, he silences them

by the statement that He Whom they had slain had risen. He takes the war into the enemy's camp, driving home his argument by using the very same psalm with which His Master had silenced the Jews before. We can almost hear His Master's voice—"If David then call Him Lord, how can He be his son?" And finally he ends up—"Therefore let all the house of Israel know that God hath made that same Jesus Whom ye have crucified *both Lord and Christ.*"

Only a few days pass, and we are again in the midst of an excited throng. This time it is in the Temple. In the midst stands a man who for forty years had been a cripple, but who is miraculously healed. By his side are St. Peter and St. John. St. Peter is speaking. "Why do you marvel?" he says "it is all so clear. God hath glorified His Son Jesus . . . but ye denied the *Holy One* and *the Just* . . . and killed the *Prince of Life* whom God hath raised from the dead whereof we are witnesses; and His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong."

While St. Peter is talking we notice a little company of men standing on the outskirts of the crowd. They are the authorities of the temple. They are looking vexed and angry. And "being grieved that they preached through Jesus the Resurrection of the dead" they move forward and quietly seize the Apostles and put them in hold till next morning, for it is getting late.

The morning arrives. The High Priest and the whole Sanhedrin are assembled, St. Peter and St. John are placed in the midst, and are asked by what power the miracle had been performed. Think of it. These are the men before whom Our Lord Himself only a few weeks before had stood a prisoner. This is the very place where the Master had been asked by the High Priest, "Art Thou the Son of the Blessed?" and Our Lord replied "I am." The silence is intense; St. Peter steps forward; this time it is not the Master Who is to speak, but the disciple; the very disciple who, only a few weeks back, in the same hall, had denied Him and fled. What will he say? Listen:

"Be it known unto you all and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. Neither is there *salvation* in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must *be saved*" (ACTS iv, 10).

It is a crushing answer, and fatal to the interests of the Temple and its religion: but its very boldness amazes them; and seeing the cripple standing cured, and knowing that the miracle was the talk of all Jerusalem, they dare not punish the Apostles. They know they must wait. So, having warned the Apostles not to preach in that manner again, they let them go.

The only result was that "with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (ACTS iv, 33).

Clearly the High Priest and the Jewish authorities cannot let this continue: so they try their hand again. They seize the Apostles, who had been healing the sick, and put them in prison: during the night the prison is opened by an angel, and the next thing the High Priest hears is that the Apostles are out again, preaching in the Temple. They bring them before the council, they say to St. Peter "You intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But they only get the same reply, to which Peter now adds the fact that Jesus is the Forgiver of Sins: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew and hanged on a tree—Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, *for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins*" (ACTS v, 30).

At their wits' end as to how to stop them from teaching, the Council plans to slay the Apostles, but dares not do it; so, having beaten them, they let them go.

The next scene is utterly different. We are outside the city walls. Once again there is a crowd, and in the midst is someone whom they are dragging out to die. It is St. Stephen. Why is he to die? For the Godhead of His Lord. He has been seized by the Sanhedrin, and, in the midst of an angry crowd, looks up in ecstasy to Heaven, and seeing "the Glory of God, and Jesus standing on the Right Hand of

God," cried out: "Behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." In anger they rush him outside the city, and there "they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (ACTS vii, 56). And those who stoned him laid their clothes at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul.

And now we leave Palestine and find ourselves in Athens. The Athenian assembly is sitting; in front stands someone who is speaking, and the assembly is listening. Who is the speaker? It is the young man whose name was Saul, at whose feet the murderers of St. Stephen laid their clothes. What has brought him here? And about what is he speaking so long and earnestly? It is the Godhead of that Lord and Master for Whom St. Stephen had given his life. Using the power of his great intellect, he tries to lead the Athenians by the way of their own philosophies, but at last he lays bare the final point of all his speaking:

"He will *judge the world* in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead"(ACTS xvii, 31).

Then we are told that, when they heard of the Resurrection of the dead, the less refined among the Athenians laughed openly, while the more refined said "We will hear thee again of this matter." But, so far as we know, they never asked him. And so that

mighty intellect, St. Paul, became a fool for Christ's sake.

Last of all, we see him again; this time a prisoner and in bonds, standing before the Roman Governor and King Agrippa. Paul is coming to the close of his great defence, and he is saying: "I continue unto this day witnessing both to small and great . . . that Christ should suffer and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead" (Acts xxvi, 22). At this point the Governor, Festus, breaks in and interrupts "Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad." But Paul replies "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth."

Thus from the very first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles until almost the last, the one theme which runs throughout is the Resurrection and Godhead of their Lord.

Let us gather up from the scenes which we have been considering all the different titles by which they called Him.

He is "Lord and Christ"; "God's Son"; a "Prince," "Saviour," Giver of "repentance and forgiveness of sins," "the Son of God"; He Who is "on the right hand of God"; "Judge of the world." To this teaching of the Godhead of their Lord as witnessed by the fact of the Resurrection they return again and again.

They are ridiculed for it and they are called madmen for preaching it. They are summoned before

the Jewish church and imprisoned by the greatest religious authority of their day. They had to fly in the face of their friends. For this doctrine St. Stephen was stoned and an attempt was made to slay St. Paul. They were brought before Governors such as Festus, and before kings such as Agrippa. But they never wavered, they never compromised. Why? Because the Resurrection was the ground of all their hope. It was the supreme witness that God had intervened miraculously in the history of the world, and had vindicated Jesus Christ as God the Son. From the Godhead of Her Lord flowed all the supernatural character of the Church. It was from her union with the Godhead through the Sacred Humanity of Him Who was both God and Man that the Church derived the supernatural wisdom which was to produce the Faith of the Creeds. From this union was to flow the supernatural Grace that was to feed the Church's Sacraments, and from this union was to spring that supernatural unity which was to be her most convincing witness to the world.

This then is the picture of the Church as shown to us in the Acts. She stands, a Society apart from all other societies in the world. Supernatural in her origin, she is founded by Him Who is no less than God Himself on earth. Through all her development she is supernaturally guided both in the life of the Society as a whole and in the lives of its individual members.

Thus she teaches and speaks with a supernatural

and divine authority, and the central truth which she teaches is that God has come down to earth in the Person of Her Founder, Jesus Christ, and that from that truth flow all the supernatural life and supernatural claims of the Christian Church.

When we turn to the Epistles we shall see all this filled in with a wealth of detail and confirmed in the most convincing words.

CHAP. VIII: *THE CHURCH IN THE EPISTLES*

THE CHURCH GOES INTO ALL THE WORLD TO TEACH ALL NATIONS

That the Church's mission is to the whole world is seen at once by the scope of these letters: they are letters to cities far beyond the borders of Palestine. Their range extends through Asia Minor to Greece, and through Greece finally to Rome, the centre of the civilized world, and this within a brief thirty years.

St. Paul's great letter to the Church in Rome begins and ends with this definite, world-wide claim of the Church. "Jesus . . . by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith *among all nations*" (ROMANS i, 5).

So St. Paul begins his letter, and he closes it upon the same note. "The revelation of the mystery . . . made known *to all nations* for the obedience of faith" (ROMANS xvi, 26).

THE CHURCH IS THE DIVINE TEACHER

The object of this world-wide mission of the Church is to teach the whole world a supernatural truth, which she does with a divine authority.

The Church is the bulwark of the Truth. "Which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I TIMOTHY, iii, 15), and being the pillar and ground of the truth, she has power to teach the truth:

"Christ in you, whom we preach, warning every man *and teaching every man in all wisdom*" (COL. i, 28).

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the *traditions which you have been taught*, whether by word, or our epistle" (II THES. ii, 15).

THE CHURCH TEACHES A DEFINITE FAITH

This teaching of the Church is commonly called the Faith, and is a very definite thing, which will be attacked and will have to be clung to loyally in the face of opposition:

"Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith" (II COR. xiii, 5).

"If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel" (COL. i, 23).

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines" (HEB. xiii, 9).

"It was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (JUDE 3).

All this is made luminously clear by St. Paul in his letters to Timothy and Titus, the Bishops of Ephesus and Crete respectively. In these letters we see what is the primary duty of a bishop, the guarddian of the Church in his diocese:

St. Paul begins by addressing Timothy as "My own son in the faith," and no less than four times he tells him to guard carefully the doctrine of the Faith which he has received from the Apostles:

"Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me" (II TIM, i, 13).

"Thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of *faith and of good doctrine*" (I TIM. iv, 6).

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to *doctrine*" (I TIM. iv, 13).

"Take heed unto thyself and unto the *doctrine*" (I TIM. iv, 16).

This doctrine Timothy must be ready to teach with all patience, especially to those who are in opposition to it. "The servant of the Lord must . . . be apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (II TIM. ii, 24).

In his letter to Titus St. Paul also addresses him as "Mine own son *after the common faith*" (TITUS i, 4), and

urges the same points as in his letter to Timothy, only in even stronger words. His doctrine must be pure, he must speak with definite authority, and he must sharply rebuke those who oppose the Faith.

"In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works, in *doctrine* shewing uncorruptness" (TITUS ii, 7).

"These things speak and exhort and rebuke with *all authority*" (TITUS ii, 15).

"A bishop must be blameless. . . holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught; that he may be able by *sound doctrine* both to exhort and convince the gainsayers . . . whose mouths must be stopped . . . wherefore *rebuke* them sharply, that they may be *sound in the faith*" (TITUS i, 9).

So far, then, the Epistles shew us the Church as a Society; claiming a world-wide mission to teach a very definite Faith; and we see that it is the primary duty of the bishops to guard and teach that faith, and to persuade, and if persuasion fails, to rebuke those who oppose this faith.

THE CHURCH DEMANDS OBEDIENCE TO THIS FAITH

From those who follow this Faith the Church does not ask mere "acceptance" or "agreement," but the strong words "obedience" and "submission."

This is specially noticeable in St. Paul's letter to

the Romans, the church which, as the centre in some ways, might be expected to find it hardest to obey. At the risk of being wearisome, I must repeat the passages at the beginning and end of his letter which I have already mentioned above:

"Jesus . . . by whom we have received grace and apostleship *for obedience to the faith* among all nations" (ROM. i, 5).

"The revelation of the mystery . . . made known to all nations for *the obedience of faith*" (ROM. xvi, 25, 26).

Again he says to them:

"Your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad thereof on your behalf" (ROM. xvi, 26).

This obedience is urgently pressed:

"We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake" (I THES. v, 12).

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow" (HEB. xiii, 7).

"Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls" (HEB. xiii, 17).

Obedience and submission are the words which the Church uses to express her demands upon the souls of men. Why is she so insistent? Because this obedience is essential to the unity of the Church.

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

This unity, as we have seen, is a twofold thing, an outward and visible unity springing from the inward unity of the Faith. There is to be one Faith and one Body. But the external unity is impossible without the inner unity of the Faith.

Sometimes the unity of the Faith is spoken of by itself:

"Till we all come in the *unity of the faith*" (EPHES. iv, 13).

"Stand fast in *one spirit*, with one mind striving together *for the faith* of the gospel" (PHIL. i, 27).

At other times it is the unity of the body which is emphasized:

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts to the which also ye are called in *one body*" (COL. iii, 15).

"So we being many are *one body* in Christ" (ROM. xii, 5).

Sometimes they are found together:

"For by *one Spirit* are we all baptized into *one body*" (I COR. xii, 13).

"There is *one body* and *one Spirit*, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, *one faith, one baptism*" (EPHES. iv, 4).

So vital is this unity of the Faith and of the visible Society that disobedience to the Faith is the worst possible sin and, if persevered in, must be punished by expulsion from the visible unity of the Church. The language which the Apostles use is strong and startling, so that one cannot have any doubt as to this fact. When it first came upon me in all its significance it was simply overwhelming.

First of all we are told that the root cause of disobedience to the Faith is the fundamental sin of Pride:

"If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing . . . destitute of the truth" (I TIM. vi, 3).

However high the authority or however spiritual, if he preach any other truth he is accursed:

"Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (GAL. i, 8).

This unity of the Faith is so unspeakably precious because it is the one safeguard against all false doc-

trine and against all those who are deliberately trying to wreck the Christian Faith:

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith . . . that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (EPHES. iv, 13).

No words are too strong to express the Church's abhorrence of those who resist the Truth:

"Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith" (II TIM. iii, 7).

Any contradiction of the Faith, false teaching, or heresy is regarded as deadly, nothing less than a cancer:

"Their word will eat as doth a canker, of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is passed already, and overthrow the faith of some" (II TIM. ii, 17).

How are they to be dealt with? They must be persuaded of their mistake, and then converted, or they must leave the Church; and, if they will not do this, they must be avoided or turned out. There must, at all costs, be no fellowship with them.

First they must be persuaded if possible and converted:

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death" (JAMES v, 19).

Some will automatically separate themselves:

"They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (I JOHN ii, 19).

Or again:

"These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith" (JUDE, 19).

If, however, those who are disobedient to the Faith do not leave the Church they must be avoided. Notice the earnestness and the insistence with which this is driven home:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them" (ROM. xvi, 17).

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II THES. iii, 6).

The men who refuse to obey authority are to be marked down:

"And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (II THES. iii, 14).

Finally, if necessary, he must be definitely expelled from the unity of the Church:

"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject" (TITUS iii, 10).

"If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II JOHN, 10).

And these are the words of the great Apostle of love, St. John.

It is difficult to conceive more drastic words with which to describe those who disobey the Faith than these: accursed, destitute of the truth, corrupt minds, reprobate: their disobedience is described as cunning craftiness, the sleight of men, deceit, and as eating like a canker.

No less drastic is the treatment to be meted out to them. Avoid them, withdraw yourself, have no company, reject, receive them not into your house neither bid them God speed.

LOVE AND UNITY

I had read these passages of Scripture again and again, but it was not till after my second visit to Lisieux that I began to realize their full meaning. It is quite impossible to describe the shock that it was to me when I began to grasp these facts. It was all so utterly alien to the spirit of the Anglican Church in which I had been brought up.

Hitherto, so far as I had ever faced the question, I had regarded it as good and sound that every point of view in the Anglican Church should have its say, and that, through men of all views working side by side in a friendly, Christian spirit, gradually Truth would prevail.

Personally, I was quite satisfied with this point of view, because I was entirely engrossed in Anglo-Catholicism, and quite convinced of its ultimate triumph in the Church of England. I had not been greatly worried by Anglican comprehensiveness except on one or two occasions when some extreme statement had been made. But there again it had seemed to me that the broadminded thing was to respect every man's sincerity, and to say nothing, but get on with one's job. As a freedom-loving Englishman I was all against heresy-hunting in any form,

being convinced that the safest course was to allow freedom of speech and let the error die a natural death, and that things which seemed daring innovations in this generation might be regarded as quite normal in the next.

But now I saw that all this was directly opposed to the Church as seen in the Epistles. The Christian Church in the days of the Apostles knew no glorious comprehensiveness, knew no compromise. I now saw, in the light of the Epistles, that by being in communion with those of opposing views I was sharing responsibility for those views. The Church of the Apostles taught a definite Faith; and, if anyone broke the unity of that Faith, he was excluded from the visible unity of the Church—excommunicated in fact—for the sake of dogma.

To the Anglican mind, this would seem ecclesiastical narrow-mindedness and utterly unlike the Spirit of Our Blessed Lord and His all-embracing Love for the human race. Where is the Good Shepherd here and His Love for sinners? Surely this is missing the big things and becoming intolerant and unloving. And yet these Apostles, St. Paul and St. John, were not narrow and unloving men:

"Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing" (I COR. xiii, 2).

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing" (IBID).

"Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; . . . is not puffed up" (IBID)

"Be kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love" (ROM. xii, 10).

"Brethren . . . by love serve one another" (GAL. v. 13).

"Forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (COL. iii, 13).

"And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness" (IBID).

So wrote St. Paul, and how much more so is it with St. John:

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. . . If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar . . . This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (I JOHN iv, 7).

And yet this is the same person who wrote:

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 JOHN x).

What is it that makes these men seem so inconsistent? Clearly there must be something which I had not yet fully grasped; which would make these two facts—namely, this absolute horror of anyone who denied the Faith, and this love of souls—fit in with one another.

The secret lies in the immensity of the Faith committed to the Church's keeping.

THE GODHEAD AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

It is in this central Truth of the Church's Faith that we find the answer, that is, the great Truth that God Himself has come into this world in the Person of Jesus Christ: that Our Lord is God made Man: Perfect God and Perfect Man, and that this is supremely guaranteed by the Resurrection.

The Epistles are as clear as the Acts on this point:

"Jesus Christ, Our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead" (ROM. i, 3).

"In him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (COL. ii, 9).

So wrote St. Paul, and St. John is equally clear:

"We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (I JOHN, v, 20).

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, and this is that spirit of Anti-Christ" (I JOHN iv, 3).

Here is the corner stone of the Christian Faith. We have seen it as the culminating point in all the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles, the belief that Jesus Christ is God and Man, Perfect God and Perfect Man. Any attempt to divide or separate the Godhead from the Manhood in the Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ is fatal to the Church, and therefore disastrous to the Christian Religion.

THE CHURCH'S AUTHORITY

The Christian Religion depends for all its certainty on the fact that He Who founded it was God Himself; that it was God Himself Who sent His Apostles into the world and commanded them to teach all nations the Truth which He had revealed to them; that it was God Himself Who promised to guide them into all

truth and keep them from error, and to be with them till the end of time. If He Who did all this is not God but only man, then the Church is no more than any other human Society. All her divine and supernatural authority is gone. She has no right to demand obedience from men, and nobody would be so foolish as to give her that obedience. When Religion, in some crisis of Faith or morals, asks from men and women a standard which cuts across their will, or is almost beyond the power of human endurance, they will never think of attempting it unless they know that the authority which calls them to it is Divine and cannot err.

If Christ be not God, and if the Church be not His divinely ordained organ for teaching His Truth, then all certitude as to Divine Revelation is gone: there is no authority on earth that commands our Faith and our obedience—all is uncertainty again.

Once more, if there is any contradiction within the Faith, the Church would automatically cease to be a divine teacher, because Truth must be one—it cannot contradict itself.

THE CHURCH'S SUPERNATURAL LIFE

On the other hand, if the Manhood of Our Lord is questioned or denied, then the whole of the supernatural life of the Church is destroyed. For it is by Our Lord having taken our manhood upon Himself that our humanity is taken up into the Godhead:

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (II COR. v, 19).

Our Lord's Sacred Humanity is the link by which we are united to the Godhead. There is no other link. It is the Channel through which the Divine Life flows into the Church—and so the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ on earth—the company of men and women who are lifted up into the Indivisible Life of the Godhead, so that they become actually "partakers of the Divine Nature" (II PET. i, 4).

If Christ is divided, this fails. For the Church's Union with God depends upon the Union of the Human and the Divine in the Person of Jesus Christ—Perfect God and Perfect Man. The Church, then, is the Mystical Body of Christ, drawing all her life from Him Who is the Head, through the Holy Spirit: and, because she is His Mystical Body, she cannot be divided any more than Our Lord can be divided. The fact that Our Divine Master's Body was not broken on the Cross was prophetic of this.

Now the preservation of this visible unity of the Church as a body is not at the expense of the Union of the individual soul with its Lord, as so many people fear. The heart of St. Paul's religion was an intimate union with Christ:

"To me to live is Christ."

"I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

It is St. Paul who prays for his brethren:

"That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (EPHES. iii, 16).

And yet it is St. Paul who insists on the visible unity of the Church as a body.

The reason is that each individual is only fully one with Our Lord through His Church, which is His Body. It is so in the human body—each limb is only able to fulfill its duty in so far as it is in full union with the rest of the body and its head.

St. Paul teaches this most plainly:

"For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ: for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (I COR. xii, 12).

Then St. Paul goes on to show how God has arranged in the human body that there should be the most delicate and intimate relationship between all the limbs through the medium of the one body; that each limb only fulfils its function perfectly if it is in full union with the whole body; that if one limb suffers, all the other limbs suffer too: andthen St. Paul says God has ordained all this "that there should be no schism in the body" (I COR. xii, 25)—no breaking of the unity. Finally he ends up with the tremendous sentence:

"Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular" (1 COR. xii, 27).

But so difficult is it to preserve unity on earth that it is only the Supernatural Union of the Church with the Indivisible Life of the Godhead through her Lord that preserves her external unity.

And so we come back again to Our Divine Lord's Prayer:

"I pray that they may be one, even as We are One; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me" (JOHN xvii, 22).

Now we can see why any denial of the unity of the Faith or of the external unity of the Church is regarded with such horror and spoken of so severely by men who were great lovers of souls. It is because such a denial strikes at the Person of Our Blessed Lord, destroys all divine authority of the Church, and saps her supernatural life. To warn men against such a catastrophe in the very strongest words is not the mark of narrow ecclesiasticism, but of the saviour and mother of souls; and the motive of it all is love.

No wonder St. Paul cries so insistently:

"One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;"

and that even the tender St. John says:

"Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (or, in the Vulgate, "dissolveth Jesus") "is not of God, and this is that spirit *of Anti-Christ*" (I JOHN iv, 3).

CHAP. IX : *CONCLUSION*

We are now able to gather up all that we have found about Our Lord and His Church in the New Testament. We see that Our Lord claims to be God: when He speaks, it is God speaking: when He teaches it is God's Teaching: His Authority is God's Authority: He came to give the Supreme Revelation of God to men.

When He left the world, what provision did He make that His Truth should be handed on pure and undefiled? Where did He leave His Authority? Did He write a book? No. He handed on His Authority to His Apostles. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations." And because they were His representatives, vested with His Divine Authority, therefore, they were to demand obedience; and those who believed would be saved while those who wilfully rejected their teaching would stand condemned. They were to command obedience.

To enable them to carry out this Commission, He promised them the Divine Guidance of the Holy Spirit to guide them into all Truth—and He says He will be with them till the end of Time.

He prayed that they and those whom they taught

might be one in the Very Unity of the Godhead—"that they may be one in Us." To this Life of the Godhead they were to be united through their union with Him, and this union was to show itself in an external unity which should be so wonderful that it would convince the world of His Deity, and should stand as a mark of the Love of God the Father for the Church.

In the Acts and Epistles we have seen the clear and logical development of this Commission. The Apostles are told by Our Lord to wait at Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes to give them power and guidance. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit comes, and the Church goes forth to teach the world. We see her guided supernaturally by the Holy Ghost, teaching a supernatural truth, and demanding obedience. We see her teaching everywhere the Godhead of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and that this is guaranteed by the Resurrection. Jesus Christ is Perfect God and Perfect Man: in the face of all opposition, before governors and kings, she preaches this. This Truth is the source of her authority and the secret of her unity. This unity of the Faith and of the Society she values as she values her very life. Anybody who seeks to undermine the Faith is regarded with the greatest horror, and ejected from the visible unity of the Church.

The Unity of the Faith cannot be divided because it is His Truth, and the Truth of The Lord endureth for ever: and the Unity of the Society cannot be

divided because it is His Body, and Christ cannot be divided.

Is there such a Church to-day? If so, had I met it? The answer, I knew in my heart, was: "Yes, there is such a Church, the Catholic Church, and I had met it at Lisieux."

I had seen there that the Catholic Church is the only Church which goes into all the world and claims to possess a Divine Authority to teach all nations. She is the only Church which claims a supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit which keeps her from error whenever she teaches anything to be necessary in Faith and Morals.

She is the only Church which demands absolute obedience from her children, and she is the only Church that is able to secure that obedience, and her people give it gladly.

She alone teaches one Truth wherever she goes, and she is the only Church which preserves an unbroken, visible unity all over the world.

The central Truth she teaches is the Godhead of her Lord, guaranteed by His Resurrection. It is the basis of all her authority and the source of her supernatural life. She never allows this Faith to be questioned for one moment, and anyone who did so would be ejected from her visible unity. This Church is not one of two or more Churches making a similar claim. No other Church, neither the Eastern nor the Anglican, claims to be the sole teacher of the whole wide world. In point of fact, there is no other

world-wide Church. She stands alone, both in her claim and in the fact that history shows her to have fulfilled that claim. She stands alone, sole, exclusive, self-evident. It was the consciousness of the Supernatural as I had found it at Lisieux which arrested me, and drew my attention to the Church which had produced such a marvellous thing. The Saint of Lisieux pointed me to the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church sent me to Holy Scripture, and Holy Scripture sent me back to the Catholic Church. And this must always be the order of things.

The Catholic Church is not the Catholic Church because you can prove her to be so from Holy Scripture. She exists in her own right, making her own claims before the world. She existed before the New Testament was written. Our Lord did not promise infallibility to a book, but He did promise infallibility in her teaching to His Church. The New Testament is guaranteed to us by the Church that produced it, and in the book which she has written she has recorded the beginnings of her own history.

But there was yet another thing to be faced: the Catholic Church also told me that to belong to her one must be in Communion with the Pope—that Our Lord had constituted St. Peter and his successors as the head of the Church on earth, that therefore, the Pope was the source of all Church authority and the centre of the Church's unity: and that the Pope was infallible whenever, in the name of the

Church, he defined anything as binding in Faith or Morals.

Before my visits to Lisieux I had never seriously studied the Papal Claims. I now knew that I must do so. The next chapter tells the results of that study.

CHAP. X: *THE PAPACY IN THE GOSPELS*

I HAVE already mentioned that it was not till my visit to Lisieux, after nearly fifteen years ministry as an Anglican, that I first came face to face with the Catholic Church as a living thing, and got my first glimpse into the inner secrets of her supernatural life.

In the same way, incredible though it may seem, it was not till then that I ever seriously considered the Petrine texts, or studied the Gospels and the Acts to see what the position given to St. Peter by Our Lord really was. The reason for this, I suppose, was, first and above all, the complete conviction that Rome was fundamentally wrong, a conviction which still lingers in the hearts and minds of most Englishmen: consequently I had taken what I had been taught at my Theological College without any questioning, and had never worried further.

So far as I had considered the question, I should have said that the Papacy was the central point of difference between the Church of England and the Church of Rome; that it was an addition to the original Faith and had no real origin in the Gospels; that, in the subsequent history of the Church, it

grew and developed under the shelter of imperial Rome; that it had been supported by not very creditable diplomacy and was, essentially, a man-made thing. I should have maintained that the Papacy, so far from being the centre of unity, had been a cause of division, being responsible, to a large degree, for the defection first of the Eastern Orthodox Church and then of the English Church: that it was our duty to protest against the later claims of the Papacy and to help towards building up a non-papal Catholicism, and to work for the day when re-union might come with the Pope as Primate of the Universal Church, but that before that could be brought about there would have to be great modifications in the Papal Claims.

But now all this was changed. At Lisieux I had met the supernatural as I had never met it before. I knew that it was the direct result of an authority and a unity which, in their turn, were entirely supernatural. This authority and unity, I now realized, were inseparably bound up with the Papacy. The conclusion was obvious. The vague theories which I had hitherto held with regard to the Papacy were inadequate. There was far more in it than I had thought, and I had now got to face the question out.

The moment I began to study the New Testament, with this in my mind, I was amazed when I realized the degree to which St. Peter stands out from the rest of the Apostles. I had always vaguely

supposed that St. Peter's prominence was mainly due to the impetuosity of his character, and that it was his natural tendency to take the initiative which brought him so inevitably to the front. But when I came to the Gospels and the Acts, I was staggered to find that St. Peter's name is mentioned on over one hundred and ninety occasions, while the number of occasions on which the name of St. John, who comes next, is mentioned is only twenty-nine: and, so far from this being the result of St. Peter's natural initiative all the more important occasions on which St. Peter stands in such prominence are the result of Our Lord's own deliberate action.

Let us consider some of these occasions:

ST. PETER THE SPOKESMAN OF THE APOSTLES

In the first place, St. Peter again and again appears as the spokesman of the Apostles.

In the Mount of the Transfiguration, an incident recorded by all the first three Gospels, it is St. Peter who speaks to Our Lord, and it is in response to him that a Voice comes from the cloud "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him" (MARK ix, 7). In the story of the rich young man, it is St. Peter who says "Lo we have left all and have followed Thee" (MARK x, 28). It is St. Peter who draws Our Lord's attention to the blighted fig tree, and it is St. Peter who puts the question to Our Lord "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?" (MATT. xviii, 21).

Again, it is at St. Peter's request (MATT. xv, 15), that Our Lord expounds the parable of the things which defile a man, and, once more, it is in answer to St. Peter's question "Lord speakest Thou this parable unto us or even to all?" (LUKE xii, 41), that Our Lord spoke the parable of the faithful and wies steward.

In all these instances St. Peter comes to the front so naturally and inevitably that the conviction grows on one that he does so not because of his temperament but because it was the recognized thing among the Apostles that he should speak on their behalf.

This is specially noticeable on the great occasion in John vi, at the close of Our Lord's Discourse on the Blessed Sacrament. St. John's account of this incident is most dramatic. The scene is set in the synagogue at Capernaum, and is depicted as the climax and crowning point of Our Lord's Galilean Ministry, in the very synagogue which had seen the opening of that Ministry a brief two years before. Our Lord's Sermon is a very deep and searching discourse on the Incarnation, and on the Holy Eucharist which is an extension of it. At the end of the discourse, while others are turning away in disbelief, St. Peter is described as making a great Confession of Faith in these two fundamental truths on behalf of the other Apostles. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (JOHN vi, 68).

It is difficult, in the light of the subsequent history of the Church, not to regard these words as prophetic and to hear in the voice of St. Peter the voice of his successors down the ages defining and guarding these two great truths, the Incarnation and the Blessed Sacrament, in the face of a disbelieving world, in the name of the Catholic Church. And yet I had read this passage again and again and had never realized the immense importance of the confession of faith here made, and of the fact that it was St. Peter who made it.

ST. PETER AND THE MIRACULOUS

In the next series of incidents, Our Lord deliberately associates St. Peter with Himself in the working of miracles. St. Peter is singled out as the person in connexion with whom He manifests His Miraculous Power in a way in which He does not manifest it with any other individual Apostle.

The first is the miraculous draught of fishes, which is recorded in St. Luke's account of the call of the Apostles. It is St. Peter to whom Our Lord speaks, it is St. Peter who lets down the net and it is St. Peter to whom Our Lord says "Fear not, from henceforth *thou* shalt catch men" (LUKE v, ff.).

On the second occasion St. Peter is given power to walk upon the water as His Master had done (MATT. xiv, 28). Peter fails in his first attempt, but is enabled to succeed by a special manifestation of

Our Lord's Supernatural Power; and, sharing that Power with His Master, St. Peter returns with Him to the boat, walking on the water.

Again, at Capernaum, it is through St. Peter that Our Lord works the miracle of the tribute money to be given to the local taxgatherer (MATT. xvii, 24ff.) We shall return to this incident again later.

And the fourth occasion is that of the second miraculous draught of fishes, which is told us by St. John (JOHN xxi, 3ff.). It is St. Peter who is in charge of the boat, it is St. Peter who rushes back to the shore, and it is St. Peter who draws in the net, this time unbroken by the multitude of the fishes.

In all of these, except perhaps the last, in addition to the working of the miracles, we see Our Lord engaged in intensely personal dialogue with St. Peter to a degree unrecorded as regards any of the other Apostles.

As the solemn moment of the Passion draws near, it is St. Peter through whom Our Lord, as He washes His disciples' feet, gives that most touching lesson that the true leader is he who ministers to those whom he leads, and that the secret of true greatness lies in Service (JOHN xiii, 4ff.). While in the Agony of Gethsemane, it is to St. Peter that Our Lord turns as the one from whom He specially expects support and understanding: "Simon, sleepest thou?" (MARK xiv, 37), and, when at last Our Lord is seized, it is St. Peter who attempts to lead the

Apostles in the defence of his Master (JOHN xviii, 10).

When we gather up all these instances in which St. Peter stands out in such unquestioned prominence, first as spokesman of the Apostles, and secondly in relationship to His Divine Master, Our Blessed Lord, the next overwhelming fact, recorded for us by both St. Paul and St. Luke, follows as almost inevitable. That fact is this, that it was to St. Peter that Our Lord showed Himself after His Resurrection before He showed Himself to the rest of the Apostles.

Thus far, by our study of the Gospels, we see from evidence drawn from all sides that St. Peter, for some reason or other, occupied a unique position of prominence among the rest of the Apostles; a position which cannot be adequately explained, even so far as we have already got, as merely the result of his impetuous temperament.

We will now pass on to see how the Gospels deliberately accepted and noted this priority of St. Peter in two unmistakable ways.

ST. PETER'S HOUSE

But, before we do this, there is another most interesting fact to be noted. Just as it was from St. Peter's boat that Our Lord preached His first Sermon to the multitude, so it was in St. Peter's house that Our Lord wrought His first Miracle upon the sick when He healed "Simon's wife's

mother" of her fever (MARK i, 29); and it was to St. Peter's door that evening, in the light of the setting sun, that they brought their sick and suffering and He healed them all. "All the city," we are told, "was gathered at the door."

Our Lord seems to have been publicly recognized as a lodger in the house of St. Peter, for St. Matthew, himself a taxgatherer, records how it was to St. Peter that the taxgatherers came, asking "Doth your Master pay tribute?" and, when St. Peter comes into the house, Our Lord meets him with the command to go and catch a fish which will provide the needed money (MATT. xvii, 24).

If then St. Peter's house was Our Lord's permanent home in Capernaum, added meaning is given to many incidents and sayings which must have taken place in that house. For example, the cure of the paralytic man and the announcement of the forgiveness of sins (MARK ii, 1ff.); the saying that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (iii, 22ff.); and the parable about the things which defile a man (vii, 17).

Above all, it would then be in St. Peter's house that the last Instruction, as recorded by St. Mark, was given. All the Synoptics record the questioning amongst the Apostles as to who was to be the greatest in the Kingdom, and Our Lord's showing them a little child as their model.

But, whether this be so or not, it is certain that it was to St. Peter's house that the taxgatherers came

to secure the tribute money, and it was in St. Peter's house that Our Lord, in His discussion of this point, said "Notwithstanding lest *we* should offend them . . . . that take, and give unto them for *me and thee*" (MATT. xvii, 27).

Though Our Lord often speaks of Himself and His Apostles as "we," never does He use the word "we" of Himself and one other individual except when He speaks of the Heavenly Father, and, here, of St. Peter. The very next passage, in which the Apostles come with their question as to who should be the greatest, seems to show that this pre-eminence of St. Peter was making itself realized by this incident.

But now let us return to the two unmistakable ways in which the writers of the Gospels have officially and deliberately accepted and noted the Priority of St. Peter.

The first is in their account of the Call of the Apostles. In each case they record that St. Peter was the first to be called (MATT. iv, 18; MARK i, 16; LUKE v, 1).

In St. Luke's account this fact is accentuated by the writer telling not only how St. Peter was the first called, but that it was after Our Lord had been preaching to the multitude from St. Peter's boat, and after the miracle of the draught of fishes which was breaking St. Peter's nets, that Our Lord added a personal assurance to His first chosen Apostle, "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

The second occasion on which these three Evangelists record this priority of St. Peter is in their account of the choosing of the Twelve Apostles. In each account St. Peter is placed first and in each account he is given a special name:

"Now the names of the twelve Apostles are these; the first Simon, who is called Peter," etc. (MATT. x, 2).

"And he ordained twelve . . . . and Simon he surnamed Peter," etc. (MARK iii, 14ff.).

"And he chose twelve, whom also he named Apostles; Simon (whom he also named Peter)," etc. (LUKE vi, 13).

St. Mark and St. Luke, in their Gospels, make it clear that the Apostles were chosen from a larger company of disciples and that, out of this little company of twelve, Simon was chosen first (all three Synoptics place him first on their list), and that to him, for some mysterious reason, Our Lord gave the surname Peter.

Let us once again gather up all that we have learnt so far. We have seen that St. Peter's name is mentioned over one hundred and ninety times in the Gospels and Acts, while St. John, who comes next, is mentioned only twenty-nine times: that St. Peter again and again appears as the natural spokesman of the Apostles: that Our Lord and the Apostles appear to accept him as such without any comment or surprise: that Our Lord associates St. Peter with

Himself in certain outstanding miracles: that He gives him the personal lesson concerning leadership at the feet-washing: that He associates Himself, in the incident of the payment of the taxgatherer, with St. Peter in a particularly intimate way: that He lodged in St. Peter's house, and that He appeared to him first, before the other Apostles, after His Resurrection. Finally, Our Lord called him first of all His Apostles, both when He gave them their first Call by the lakeside, and also when, later on, He ordained them as His Apostles, and that to him, for some mysterious but very definite reason, was given the surname "Peter."

Is this all that we have upon which to rest the argument for the Primacy of St. Peter? Is it based merely upon the incidents which we have already studied? The amazing thing is that, in spite of all that we have already seen, we have not yet considered the central argument at all. We shall find that the true reason will be revealed to us through the mysterious surname Peter. Let us pursue this clue. Why do all the Evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke, make mention of this surname?

The first passage to be considered is in St. John's Gospel. In the opening chapter we are told that Our Lord, the very first time He met St. Peter, gave him this mysterious surname—a thing which He did not do in the case of any of the other Apostles.

"And when Jesus beheld him he said, Thou art

Simon, the son of Jona. Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is being interpreted, A stone" (JOHN i, 42).

In the case of the surname Boanerges, given later to James and John, we see the meaning; for it was descriptive of their character, the Sons of Thunder. But, in this case, it had no relation to any natural quality of St. Peter; for, in the Gospel records, he proves to be anything but a rock. It seems to point to some destiny which he was to fulfil, and not to any natural quality which he possessed.

Is there any such destiny? If so, what was it? For the greater part of the Gospel story we are left expectant and unsatisfied. It is not till the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew that the mystery is explained.

We are in Caesarea Philippi at the end of the Galilean Ministry, and Our Lord puts to His Apostles the supreme question as to His Deity:

"Whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what-

soever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Let us think this out carefully. This saying of Our Lord divides itself into two parts.

(a) "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

To get the full force and meaning of Our Lord's words we must remember that He spoke in Aramaic, and used the word Cephas—Thou art Cephas, and upon this Cephas I will build My Church. The best English equivalent would be Thou art Rock, and upon this Rock I will build My Church.

To the Jewish mind, and in the wild Palestinian country, the rock was the great refuge in time of war and the natural shelter from the storm. Only a rock gives an immovable foundation. Our Lord tells us so in His parable of the man who built his house upon a rock. "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock."

Thus Our Lord foretells that He is going to build His Church upon a rock, and that that Rock is Peter.

And it is impressive to realize that this is the first occasion on which He is recorded to have used the words "My Church." Hitherto He had always spoken of the Kingdom of His Father; now He speaks of My Church—His Own—over which He

has power to appoint whatever officers He wills. The first part ends with a promise that against this Church—this City founded upon a Rock—the powers of the opposing city of evil shall never triumph—"the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

(b) "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

St. Peter is not merely to be the foundation of the Church, he is also to be the supreme authority. His position does not cease with the completion of the city, it is to last on so long as the city shall exist. It is impossible to conceive of any more forcible words that Our Lord could possibly have chosen to express the absolute and supreme authority which He intended St. Peter and his successors to exercise throughout the history of His Church.

More than this, the conviction that Our Blessed Lord is conferring on St. Peter a unique office and privilege is immeasurably deepened when we realize that the titles Foundation Stone and Key Bearer were titles recognized as Messianic, belonging to Our Lord Himself.

"Behold, I lay in Sion for foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation" (ISAIAH xxviii, 16), and also

"The key of the house of David will I lay upon

his shoulder; so he shall open and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open" (ISAIAH xxii, 22).

Both of these texts we find used in the New Testament as fulfilled in Our Lord:

"Wherefore it is contained in the Scripture: Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that shall believe in him shall not be confounded" (I PETER, ii, 6), and "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth" (REV. iii, 7).

The next passage of Holy Scripture which throws an even clearer light upon the Primacy of St. Peter is in St. Luke's Gospel. Our Lord's statement that St. Peter was the rock upon which He was going to build His Church and His promise that He would give to St. Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven seem to have caused considerable stir among the Apostles. A note of very human rivalry seems to appear, all the more natural in view of the fact that, a little later, Our Lord had conferred very similar powers on all the Apostles when He said: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (MATT. xviii, 18), a text which is often used to show that Our Lord only gave to St. Peter what He had also given to the rest of the Apostles.

We know that, soon after, the mother of James and John came to ask for a special privilege for her sons, that they might sit on the Right Hand and on the Left Hand in Our Lord's Kingdom. From their position among the Apostles and from their strength of character—Sons of Thunder—they might seem eminently suited for such a position, and Our Lord seems to imply the same. For, when, in answer to His question as to whether they are able to drink of His Cup, they say We are able, He replies, You shall indeed.

Now in St. Luke's Gospel these questionings reappear at one of the most solemn and dramatic moments in the Gospel story, immediately after the Institution of the Last Supper.

The Apostles ask Our Lord who among them is to be considered the greatest. Our Lord replies in a passage in which He emphasizes, with tremendous force, the divinely given power which the Apostles are to have over the world. They are to form a Kingdom; they are to sit at the King's table, and they are to judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

Our Lord then goes on to say that in him who is to be the greatest—and here He uses a word much stronger than that used by the Apostles, a word denoting absolute authority and leadership—the greatness is to lie in service:—the same lesson which Our Lord taught, in much the same words, to St. Peter himself, in St. John's account of the feet-washing.

And then, immediately, Our Lord turns to St. Peter and says, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have *you* (plural), that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for *thee* that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (LUKE xxii, 31).

Every word is of importance. The repetition "Simon, Simon" is most impressive:—"Satan hath desired to have you" (plural) "that he may sift you as wheat"—a fiery trial is about to befall the whole of the little band:—"But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Our Lord singled out one from the little company, and for him He has specially prayed. "And when thou art converted"—though he may partially fail, the Divine Intercession will preserve him—"strengthen thy brethren"—and after the trial St. Peter is to be the pillar and guide of the rest of the Apostles.

Our Lord deliberately singles out St. Peter from the little band, and emphasizes the fact that, so far from James and John being first and second, fitted though they might seem, the position of leadership was given to St. Peter. Our Lord foretells a severe trial for His chief Apostle, but promises that his faith shall be preserved by the Divine Intercession, and finally shows that this position is a position of definite leadership over the rest of the Apostles and is a Divine Gift, not dependent upon any natural quality.

The final scene in which Our Lord still further

establishes the Primacy given to St. Peter is in St. John's Gospel. The scene is by the side of the lake, after the Resurrection. Just as St. John, in his last chapter, is at pains to show the confirmation of the Apostles in their powers, in spite of their failure at the Crucifixion, so he shows quite clearly the confirmation of St. Peter in the primacy given him by Our Lord. Once more Our Lord singles out His chief Apostle more definitely than ever by His words "Lovest thou me *more than these*"? Three times He asks him "lovest thou me"? Three times He bids St. Peter "Feed my lambs... feed my sheep... feed my sheep." And, in these words, He commits to His Apostle the duty of feeding and tending His Flock. He constitutes him the supreme shepherd of His Church.

The force of this Commission comes home with added power when we realize that, just as in the case of the foundation stone and the key bearer, so here Our Blessed Lord is delegating to St. Peter another of the titles recognized as belonging to The Messiah.

"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd" (ISAIAH xl, 11).

It seems impossible that the Apostles should not have recognized the analogy between this scene by the lake side and that other scene on the mountain top at the end of Moses' life. There Moses, just before his Assumption, asks The Lord to appoint

someone over the congregation "which may go out before them and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out and which may bring them in: that the Congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd" (NUMBERS xxvii, 16ff.). And The Lord appointed Joshua to take Moses' place. Here Our Lord, just before His Ascension, appoints St. Peter to be the chief shepherd of His Church after He has gone.

In the opening chapter of St. John's Gospel, the curtain rises upon the scene in which Our Lord prophetically announces the mysterious surname of His chief Apostle. In the last chapter, the curtain falls upon the same two figures, Our Lord and His chief Apostle, now fully endowed with the privileges and responsibilities that that surname, now no longer mysterious, involves.

This then is the Gospel witness to the Primacy of St. Peter. He is shown as the spokesman of the Apostles. He is associated personally, in dialogues and miracles, with Our Lord as no other Apostle is. He is the first to be called. His name stands first on every list. To him is given the surname Peter, meaning a rock.

In St. Matthew's Gospel he is appointed the foundation stone of the Church, and to him are given the keys, the power of governing that Church, till the end of time.

He is the object of a special intercession by Our Lord and is selected to be the leader and support

of the Apostles. Finally he is appointed the chief Shepherd of the Church. On each of these last three occasions, St. Peter is singled out from the rest of the Apostles. And the titles given him, foundation stone, key bearer, shepherd, are titles known to all the Apostles as belonging to The Messiah.

CHAP. XI: *THE PAPACY IN THE ACTS*

When we turn to the Acts of the Apostles we find the Primacy of St. Peter working itself out quite clearly. At the very opening of the book St. Peter appears as the already recognized head of the Apostles. It is St. Peter who decides upon and carries out the election of the new Apostle Matthias. The choosing of the Apostles had rested solely and entirely with Our Blessed Lord—"Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you"—and there is no evidence that Our Lord had given any instruction to St. Peter or the Church. The choice therefore of someone to take the place of Judas was a momentous undertaking, and yet, without any previous election as their leader or chairman, we see St. Peter originating and carrying out this most difficult proceeding. In other words, in the first incident shewn us in the Acts, we have the beginnings of that power of development in the Church which, having once begun, was never to cease; and we see it manifesting itself under the guidance of St. Peter.

ST. PETER AND THE MIRACULOUS

Just as Our Blessed Lord singled out St. Peter to be specially associated with Him in certain miracles,

so, in the Acts, we find that the miraculous attends St. Peter wherever he goes. It is St. Peter who works the first public miracle at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. It is before St. Peter that Ananias and Sapphira give up the ghost. So great was his power realized to be that the people "brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them" (ACTS v, 15). It is St. Peter who raises up Dorcas from her deathbed; and it is St. Peter who is seized by Herod, as the representative of the Apostles, and is imprisoned, and it is for St. Peter that the prison is miraculously opened so that he is enabled to escape.

THE THREE GREAT DOGMATIC UTTERANCES

We now come to three great dogmatic utterances which, more than anything, serve to illustrate St. Peter's unquestioned Primacy in the Acts.

(a) *To the Jewish Public.*

When, after the Descent of The Holy Ghost at Pentecost, the Church starts forth on her mission to teach the world, it is St. Peter who preaches the first dogmatic sermon to the multitude in Jerusalem. In the most definite language and in tones of the utmost assurance he teaches the central truth of the Christian Church, the Deity of His Lord. "Ye men of Judæa and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you and hearken to my words . . . .

Ye men of Israel, hear these words . . . . God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ" (ACTS ii, 14). Again it is St. Peter who, at the end of the sermon, lays down the condition of entering the Church. "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ" (ACTS ii, 36ff.).

(b) *To the Jewish Sanhedrin.*

It is St. Peter who stands before the Sanhedrin, where His Master had so recently stood before him, and, in the name of the Church, makes the official statement of the Godhead of Him Whom that very Sanhedrin had condemned to death; that He was the stone set at naught by the builders which is now become the head of the corner, and that there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved (ACTS iv, 12).

This utterance, made before such an official assembly, was the Church's first great statement of complete independence of the official religion of the Jews. It caused the persecution of the Church by the Jewish authorities and the martyrdom of its members. And the person who made this statement is St. Peter.

(c) *To the Gentiles.*

Important and decisive as was St. Peter's utterance before the Sanhedrin, it was almost as nothing compared with St. Peter's utterance to the Gentile

soldier, Cornelius. This incident is the most crucial moment in the life of the infant Church. The point at issue was nothing less than the question as to whether the narrow and national prejudices of the Jewish mind were to be overcome and the Church to embrace all the nations of the world or whether the Church should be limited to the Jewish race.

It is indeed the supreme crisis in the Acts. St. Luke clearly recognizes it as such and describes it in the most dramatic manner. The divine guidance is vividly depicted in the two visions, the one to Cornelius and the other to St. Peter. In the light of the revelation that he was to call nothing common or unclean, St. Peter goes to the Gentile household and addresses them in the Name of The Lord Jesus. He finishes his address with the definite statement: "To Him—Jesus—give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sin" (ACTS x, 43).

With this authoritative utterance all national barriers fall, and St. Luke continues: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word."

But such a revolutionary event was not likely to pass unchallenged, and when St. Peter returned to Jerusalem his action was strongly questioned. St. Peter makes his defence, explaining the divine revelation which he had received, and the account closes with the words, "When they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God

saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (ACTS xi, 18).

Here then is the supreme moment in the Acts. Here is the opening of the door to the Gentiles. And the Apostle who opened it is not St. Paul but St. Peter. Ever since I can remember I was brought up to consider St. Paul as the great Apostle of the Gentiles, and it came as a great shock and a complete revelation to me to realize that, great missionary to the Gentiles as St. Paul undoubtedly was, all his mission work was only possible because St. Peter had opened the door before him, and because the Church had accepted that fact on St. Peter's authority.

Here perhaps it might be useful to add that the fact that St. Paul figures so greatly in the latter part of the Acts ceased to be a great difficulty to me when I realized that the latter part is purely a biography of St. Paul himself and his mission and not an account of the development of the Church as a whole, as is the case with the first chapters of the Acts. For example, the shipwreck of St. Paul, a fact quite unimportant in itself, occupies far more space than the much more important council of Jerusalem.

THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

That St. Peter was the person who had opened the door to the Gentiles and that it was on his authority that the Church had accepted that fact is confirmed

by the Council of Jerusalem. Gentile converts come pouring in, and their relationship to the rest of the Church must be regulated and standardized. So a council of the Apostles and elders is called. Here again, before I had studied the question carefully, I had assumed that James was the president of the Council; but when I examined the facts I found that it was St. Peter who dominated the scene.

The assembly is called, and there is much discussion among the members. At a given point St. Peter rises and opens the official discussion with the most complete assertion of his own authority. "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel and believe" (ACTS XV, 7).

His whole appeal is to the fact that his voice, chosen by God, had already decided the fact of the admission of the Gentiles to the Church. Then he continues, by virtue of that same authority, to direct them not to put an unnecessary burden on the necks of the disciples.

That this authority was at once recognized by the assembly is clear, for we are told "Then all the multitude kept silence and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul" (ACTS XV, 12).

After Barnabas and Paul have stated the case of the Gentiles, James, who apparently held the strict circumcision view—for in the Galatian incident St. Paul speaks of "certain who came from James"

demanding circumcision—rises and suggests, as it were, a compromise. And, as he opens his speech, to what authority does he appeal? To St. Peter. "Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simon hath declared how God at first did visit the Gentiles." The compromise suggested by James is accepted, and the matter is finally settled.

This then is the final witness in the Acts to the Primacy of St. Peter. Here we see it in its rightful place as the leader and guide of the Apostles and the final appeal in the first authoritative Council of the Church.

But so strong was the conviction in my mind that James was the president of the Council that it was some considerable time before I could realize the reality of the situation. For some little time I was still afraid that those who urged the Council as an argument for the Primacy of Peter were really only trying to score a controversial point.

There are sure to be many who read this who will still fear that it may only be a Roman argument for controversial purposes. To show that this is not so I quote the following words of Professor Hort:

"There is nothing in St. Luke's words which bears out, what is often said, that St. James presided over the conference at Jerusalem. If he had, it would be strange that his name should never be mentioned separately at the beginning. In the decisive speeches at the end, the lead is taken by St. Peter, the oremost of the twelve. Then again, the

words which begin his (St. James's) conclusion: '*Wherefore my judgment is*' cannot reasonably be understood as an authoritative pronouncement by himself independently."*

We are now in a position to gather up all that the Acts have to tell us of the Primacy of St. Peter. We see him at once as the recognized leader and guide of the Church in the appointment of the Apostle Matthias. Miracle after miracle is performed at his hands. In all the public statements of the Church it is St. Peter who speaks. It is St. Peter who is chosen to bring in the Gentiles to the Church. It is St. Peter who is the leader in the first authoritative Council of the Church, and it is by his authority that the question with which that Council was concerned is finally decided. In that part of the Acts which deals with the Church as a whole, St. Peter is overwhelmingly the dominating figure: his whole position throughout is exactly what our study of the Gospels would lead us to expect. St. Peter is already the rock foundation, the governor with the keys, and the chief shepherd watching over the flock committed to his care; and the support and strengthener of his fellow Apostles.

* *The Christian Ecclesia.* 1897. pp. 79-80.

CHAP. XII : *THE PAPACY IN HISTORY*

We have seen the Primacy of St. Peter in the Gospels, and we have seen it in the Acts. We must now consider the Primacy of St. Peter in history. What is there in the subsequent history of Christianity to correspond with this overwhelming emphasis of the Primacy of St. Peter in the Gospels and in the Acts? Is there anything?—Now, to-day? If so, what and where is it? There is one answer and only one—the Papacy. There is no other claimant anywhere to be found. And where do we find the Papacy? We find it as the foundation and corner stone of the Catholic Church: the very Church which, as we have seen, alone fulfils Our Lord's commands, and goes into all the world claiming a Divine Authority to teach all nations. She alone claims a supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit which keeps her from error whenever she teaches anything to be necessary in Faith and Morals. She alone secures obedience and preserves a visible unity wherever she goes; and this Church claims to-day, and has always claimed, that the secret of her authority and of her unity lies in the Primacy of Peter. The Papacy is the source of her

divine authority and the centre of her supernatural unity. Where we find the Papacy, there we find a church fulfilling Our Lord's Commands, endowed with those supernatural powers which Our Lord clearly gave to His Church. Where there is no Papacy no such Church is to be found. And yet to-day there are many who, for various reasons, do not believe in the Papacy, and remain outside its fold. The reasons are probably never quite the same in any two cases, and I can only speak of those which were real to me when I first seriously began to face the question out. My difficulties were mainly from Scripture. It seemed to me that, if Our Blessed Lord had meant to give such an overwhelming office to any one person, if one person was to possess the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven and be the infallible guide and ruler of the Church on Earth, then He would have made it overwhelmingly clear, so clear that His Apostles could not have mistaken it, and that the mother of Zebedee's sons would not have dared to suggest their being first and second in the Kingdom.

This remained a difficulty until I realized that, in my acute anxiety to get at the truth and to be utterly convinced of the Papacy before I accepted it, I was asking of Scripture vastly more than I had any right to ask. I was demanding that Scripture should be a complete book of the rules of the Christian Church, carefully tabulated in every detail.

I was failing to realize that the ultimate authority

must always be the teaching Church; and that, while the germ of all the fundamental doctrines of the Church are to be found in Scripture, yet their full force and value could only be seen as interpreted by the tradition of the divinely guided Church to which the Scriptures owed their very origin and existence, and without which they become unintelligible. I realized how very little of the deeds and sayings of Our Lord and of the Apostles have been preserved in writing, in the small bulk of the Gospels and the Acts. It is of course a very common mistake among English people to overlook this, and to treat the Scriptures as though they had been written for a world in which there would be no living and teaching Church.

As an Anglo-Catholic I had always believed in a teaching Church to interpret the Bible. But at Lisieux, where I saw for the first time the reality of a visible church with a visible authority, the teaching Church became an altogether more definite and concrete thing.

The Anglo-Catholic view of an invisible authority still leaves room for endless individual interpretations of Scripture. On the view that there is no visible church, the practice of making doctrines depend upon texts, and of weighing commas to determine what Our Lord intended is understandable enough; but I began to realize more vividly that to treat the Scriptures in that way was to misunderstand their purpose, through ignoring their

place in Our Lord's larger plan and the reality of the visible teaching church. If I seem, in these pages, to treat the text as the test of the truth of doctrines I do so because this is a record of the way in which my opinions changed, and because I did in fact find in the picture of the first Apostolic days, left in the Acts and in the Epistles, the clearest witness that the Church as a visible society and the special position of St. Peter was the accepted belief of the very first generation of Christians.

I began to see that certain truths, about which I had no doubts whatever, had far less support from Scripture than the Primacy of St. Peter. For example, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which is the basis of the whole Christian philosophy, is only explicitly expressed in one text: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (MATT. xxviii, 19).

Again, I had no doubt whatever as to Bishops, in the sense of the historic Episcopate, being essential to the life of the Church; and yet conscientious Presbyterians can read Scripture and not find any proof of it.

These facts made me see how illogical it was for me to expect more evidence for the Primacy of St. Peter than for the doctrines of the Holy Trinity or Episcopacy. But apart from this the further I studied the Petrine texts the more clear and definite it became that the evidence for the Primacy was

overwhelmingly greater than in the case either of the Holy Trinity or of Episcopacy.

I came also to see that there was an answer to those of my friends who were for ever urging the Scriptural argument that James and John, in asking for the first and second places in the kingdom, showed that they at any rate had never heard of a primacy for St. Peter. It seemed to me equally plausible to suggest that it was precisely jealousy and uneasiness at the position being accorded to St. Peter that prompted their request.

But, in any case, slowness on the part of the Apostles was no new thing. Our Lord Himself could not make them see certain things and was amazed at their dullness. "Perceive ye not, neither understand? Have ye your heart yet hardened? having eyes see ye not? and having ears hear ye not? and do ye not remember? . . . How is it that ye do not understand?" (MARK viii, 17).

Indeed Our Lord's method, as revealed in Holy Scripture, seems to have been to teach things which were not fully grasped at the time, but which gradually came to maturity in the minds of his disciples under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In the same way, He did not leave her teaching to His Church fully worked out and applied in all its aspects, but He deliberately left her the divine authority and supernatural power to develop and apply it to the ages under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

Another great difficulty at first was that it seemed so unlikely that, if St. Peter had been chosen out for this office of leadership, he should have been so drastically rebuked by Our Lord—"Get thee behind me, Satan," (MARK viii, 33), and should have been such a failure in falling asleep in Gethsemane and by denying his Lord three times in the High Priest's Palace: especially as this same capacity for error still existed after Pentecost; for, in the Galatian incident, we see him again being undoubtedly to blame and one of his fellow Apostles "withstanding him to his face."

The first thing that made me see light on this point was my realization that, on the very occasion when Our Lord stated most clearly the primacy of St. Peter, not only over the Church, but also over the other Apostles, He also deliberately foretold his coming temptation and failure. "I have prayed for thee . . . and when thou art converted." What else can this mean but a warning of coming failure? This made me see that Our Lord did not regard personal failure as necessarily inconsistent with the Primacy.

This became all the clearer when I also realized that Our Lord gave a similar rebuke or warning on each of the three great occasions when He conferred the Primacy on His chief Apostle.

(a) In St. Matthew:

"Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church," is immediately followed by "Get thee

behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me" (MATT. xvi, 23).

(b) In St. Luke:

"When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren," is accompanied by the foreshadowing of St. Peter's coming denial, which was to follow almost immediately (LUKE xxii, 32).

(c) In St. John:

After the commission "Feed my sheep," St. Peter's question, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" is met by the rebuke, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me" (JOHN xxi, 17-22).

In all these instances it seems clear that Our Lord is at great pains to show that the office of the Primacy was not dependent upon personal qualities, and that He was deliberately emphasizing the difference between the Man and the Office.

In the same way, in the later history of the Church, the Galatian incident, in which St. Paul withstood St. Peter to the face, in no way affected the Church's belief in the Primacy of St. Peter; although in the case in question St. Peter was undoubtedly at fault. The very fact that St. Luke, the great friend of St. Paul, does not even mention it in the Acts shows that the incident never bore, in the eyes of the Church, the weight which anti-papal controversialists have tried to put upon it. At the most, it

was a purely disciplinary or ceremonial matter; a question of eating at the table of the strict Jewish party, which had just arrived from Jerusalem, or at the table of the Gentile converts.

Is there not, in all this, something prophetic of that great mystery which has been, I suppose, one of the great stumbling blocks in the minds of Englishmen as regards the Papacy, the personal failure and corruption of certain of those who have been the successors of St. Peter as the head of the church on earth? No one can deny that such disasters have occurred, and the result is a deep suspicion of all church authority bred in the bones of Englishmen and unhappily fostered only too often by unscrupulous politicians. Along with this there goes an almost invincible inability to believe in any Infallibility being centred in any one person.

What can we say about this shadow which lies across the Papacy—in all other respects the greatest fact in the history of our civilization?

The first thing that helped me was that Our Blessed Lord foresaw failure even in him who was the first to fill this great office, the one who had been personally taught and selected by God Himself on earth. In His three rebukes to His chosen Apostle, rebukes which must have some deep set reason, He shows that the office of the Primacy is independent of the natural gifts or failures of the man.

Our Lord took this great risk of Truth being obscured by personal failure when He ordained that

His Church should be guided and ministered to by fallible men. "It must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh."

While He ordained that the Church should be kept from all error in her official teaching by the Gift of the Holy Ghost, He did not give her members an automatic freedom from the power of sin in their own lives. And so with the greatest of all the offices in the Church, the Primacy, when He promised St. Peter and his successors protection from error in their official teaching of Truth, He did not give freedom from personal failures.

Secondly, such a claim as that of the Papacy—the claim, that is to say, to be the divinely appointed teacher of men in Faith and Morals—will, by the staggering and astounding character of this claim, draw down upon itself the enmity of all that is worst in human nature and the stern criticism of all that is best: and the very fact that, though wounded at the very heart by the personal lives of some who have held this exalted office, the Papacy still endures as the strongest religious force amongst men is in itself a sure and certain proof of its claim and of its supernatural origin. Its claim is so terrific that it must be either the greatest possible blasphemy or the most sublime of truths. If it had been the greatest possible blasphemy, it would have disappeared amid the scorn and ridicule of men centuries ago.

INFALLIBILITY

I have spoken above of the average Englishman's difficulty in believing that infallibility can be centred in any one individual. This is largely due to the mistaken belief that Infallibility means inability to sin or commit any mistake whatever. Although I had never held quite this belief, yet it was not till after I had been to Lisieux that I had any accurate conception of what Infallibility does mean—namely that whenever the Pope speaking to the whole Church, in his office as supreme head, defines anything as binding on the whole Church either in Faith or Morals he is divinely protected from all error.

I cannot say that the argument as to the precise definition of Infallibility ever worried me very much. Many of my friends argued very strongly that, while they were prepared to accept the Primacy of St. Peter and his successors, they could not accept the later definition of the Vatican Council.

The more I considered the question, the clearer it seemed to me that it was off the point to criticize the Papal interpretation of the Primacy of St. Peter unless one had an alternative suggestion to offer.

Secondly, it became clear to me that the Society which alone had preserved her unity and authority was the only body capable of defining the nature of the Papacy which had enabled her so to preserve it.

But, even though I knew this, I still came to see

in my own case as I studied the Gospels that one of my greatest difficulties was just this shrinking from any infallible authority whatever, whether centred in a Society, the Church, or in one individual, the Pope.

I had always held that there were certain teachings of the Church which were infallible because they were all taught by the three great Communions who possessed the historic Episcopate (i.e. Bishops) namely the Eastern Orthodox, the Roman and the Anglican:—such teachings, for example, as the Creeds and the Sacraments. But I had then also believed that the Church could be, and was, visibly divided. This meant that there was no visible unity, and this at once meant that no authority could ever really be strictly applied. There was no danger here of a living authority, possessing a definite organ of expression, an authority which could lay hold on one and direct one's life and demand obedience. It was only as I realized that Our Lord's sole method for preserving His truth for men was to found a Church which should be visibly one, with a divine authority to teach one Faith wherever she went the whole world over—only then I began to realize the absolute necessity of Infallibility somewhere. How could a church claim to be a divine teacher unless she had an Infallible Authority, and how could she be the Divine Teacher of the one Truth to the whole world if she were visibly divided?

And yet, though I had seen the Infallible Authority in living action at Lisieux, producing a supernatural piety on a plane I had never known before and preserving a unity and obedience of a clearly supernatural character, and although when Lisieux sent me to the Gospels I found in them the origin of this living authority both for the Church and the Papacy, yet I can remember well the feeling "still, in spite of all this, I cannot bring myself to accept it"; so deep set are one's prejudice and independence.

For the sake of those who read this and are feeling the same—namely that though what they have read seems logical and clear, yet still they cannot accept it—let us look at it from another angle.

If Christianity is the supreme revelation of God to Man; and if, in the Person of Our Lord Jesus, God Himself has come down to teach the human race the Truth—then when He left the world there must be some society or authority to hand on that teaching down the ages. If there is such a thing as a revealed Truth to be taught to the whole world, then there must be a Society which we can trust to teach us the truth without making any mistake—and, clearly, that Society must be one and in agreement in itself as to what that Truth is—any division on this point is fatal.

There is no alternative between some such guide and my own private opinion, my own private judgment. Either there is one common revelation

of Truth or else only a morass of individual opinions.

In historic fact, the core of the conveyance and preservation of Truth has been a Society claiming this Divine Authority to teach the Truth under a special guidance of the Holy Ghost—i.e., the Catholic Church.

There can be no serious doubt that the Catholic Church is the one and only Society with an adequate authority to-day, just as the Catholic Church of St. Augustine's time was the only such Society then.

It is not primarily a question for the theologian or any other kind of intellectual.

If God is good, as He is, and if He has given a final revelation, then He will have arranged that that revelation may be recognized by the simple and unintellectual but unprejudiced person, assisted by Grace, when he sees it, just as much as by the able and academic minded.

And so we are driven back to the same point. As a matter of hard, incontrovertible fact there is one, and only one, such Society to-day—the Catholic Church. She stands before the world, claiming to be the world's divinely ordained teacher, she claims that the secret of her unity, of her authority and power to teach, lies focussed in the Papacy for the simplest soul to see and understand. She points us to the Gospels and claims that the origins of the Papacy can be found within them in the promises to St. Peter.

There is literally no other rival claimant, either as teacher of the world or as the interpreter of the promises to St. Peter.

In my own experience, all the difficulties which at the first I had felt so strongly in certain Scripture texts which seemed to tell against the Papacy, faded away, in the process of time, before the growing consciousness of the overwhelming weight of Scripture evidence taken as a whole, and before the blazing fact that there is literally no other Society which gives any effective meaning at all to the promises to St. Peter. I had either to accept the interpretation of the Catholic Church, and submit to the Papacy, or else evacuate the Petrine texts of all meaning whatsoever.

In precisely the same way, certain historical difficulties, which seemed puzzling at one time and which were so consistently urged by one's friends, began to lose their power before the growing consciousness of the Catholic Church as an increasingly living fact.

For example, the argument that there is no evidence that Our Lord meant the Primacy to be passed on to St. Peter's successors or that it ever was so passed on. The answer is of course clear as daylight to me now that Our Lord would never give His Church a head only to take it away when it was needed most.

It was the same with many other questions which at one time oppressed me. Did Liberius compro-

mise the Faith? How about the condemnation of Honorius? Was Galileo officially condemned? What are we to say about anti-popes? All these questions can be and have been debated *ad infinitum* on both sides. But when I became convinced of the meaning of the Papacy they all fell into their place as, so to speak, lawyers' arguments, and only shewed up as apparent exceptions which had no weight against the Church's persistent vitality.

All these arguments, laboured with rather monotonous regularity, became as arguments from dusty volumes in some old library compared with the living reality of the Church; they just lost all their vitality as one grew in the consciousness of the Catholic Church as she stands to-day, in spite of everything, founded on the rock of Peter, bearing so clearly the marks of her divine vocation, enshrined in an age-long Peace and yet alert in every limb; the most long-lived and yet the youngest and most active of all the religious forces of our day.

There could be but one conclusion:

Where Peter is, there is the Church—*Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia.*

CHAP. XIII : *ANGLO-CATHOLICISM*

WHAT am I to say about the Anglo-Catholic movement, the cause which for fifteen years was the absorbing interest of my life? Probably few people were more firmly imbedded in Anglo-Catholicism, more entirely absorbed in it or more completely satisfied than I was in 1924. Doubts as to the movement had never crossed my mind: avenues of usefulness were opening up for it on every side, progress was being made in every direction: dead parishes were being quickened into life and souls responding to teaching, with a corresponding deepening of piety everywhere. Personally, I was blessed with a ministry which had surrounded me with the love and devotion of many souls and had opened the door into the innermost secrets of many an English home and countless English hearts.

What was it that tore me from my allegiance? What was it that uprooted me from a situation which, spiritually and humanly, gave me all that I could desire and seemed so clearly to have the mark of God upon it?

The answer, to me, now is clear. It was the Catholic Church as I had met with her at Lisieux. All that I had seen at Lisieux, all that I had realized

in the Gospels, all this was fatal to the position in which I found myself, however successful and sound that position, at first sight, might seem to be.

The two fatal questions were the two questions of Authority and Unity.

AUTHORITY

I knew now that Our Lord had founded His Church to be the Divine Teacher of the world: that He had promised her the Gift of the Holy Spirit to guide her into all truth and that He would be with her till the end of time.

"Go and teach all nations . . . and lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world."

His Church was to be the living voice expressing and guarding His Truth—not at intervals but always and at all times until the end. To say that she had no longer the power to teach would be equivalent to saying that Our Lord is no longer with her.

Now my whole position as an Anglo-Catholic was based upon the belief that the Church had in fact so lost her power to teach: that since the first great division between East and West, Constantinople and Rome, the Church had never been able to speak with absolute authority again, and that this had been further accentuated by the rejection of the Papacy by the Anglican Communion five hundred years later. My appeal therefore lay to the teachings of what I called the undivided Church. That is to say that, although the Church was outwardly

divided into three different Communions separated outwardly from one another, I believed that it was possible to make a synthesis of all those doctrines held and taught in common by them all, and that these doctrines could be taught as infallibly true and binding upon all men.

The three Communions in question were the Orthodox Eastern Church, the Roman and the Anglican—being the three great Communions possessing the historic Episcopate, and therefore possessing a common form of government, the historic Priesthood, Sacraments and Creeds.

Thus any teaching which was not taught in common by all these three Communions was not essential; and on this ground I had hitherto rejected the Papacy. I had regarded it as something added to the Faith, as will be seen in my "Notes on the Catholic Religion." The Papal view of authority I had regarded as too narrow and as not taking in the whole situation. I believed that Rome had achieved her unity by limiting her boundaries too narrowly and that, in consequence, she had alienated half the Christian world.

Any more definite conception of Authority than that of the Undivided Church I regarded as certainly impossible and probably undesirable in the present situation of Christendom. The very vagueness of the Anglo-Catholic theory seemed a point in its favour: the ultimate reunion of Christendom was the goal of all our efforts, but it was not likely to

come in our time. Our duty was to carry on where we were: possessing Sacramental Grace we could live our Catholic life; and God would work out reunion in His Own Time, provided we all did our best to follow the light as we saw it.

The light as we saw it! And that is exactly where the trouble now lay. A new light had come into my life—at first not very clear, but destined gradually to grow till it transformed the whole of my outlook.

At Lisieux I had seen an authority supernatural and divine, active and operative in the world to-day: centralized at one point on the earth, and yet extending its sway to the furthest ends of the world. I knew now that this authority was not a crippling, mutilating thing, but that it called forth a willing obedience from men and women of every nation under the sun, and that this obedience made possible a life of supernatural faith unknown to me before. The words authority, obedience, faith were all linked inseparably for me now, and all possessed an entirely new quality. My study of the Scriptures had confirmed the Catholic Church's claim that by these marks she was to be recognized as the one Church founded by Our Lord.

In the light of all this I came to see that I must hold the view that the Church divinely empowered by Our Lord to teach the truth to the whole world could never cease to speak and teach with a certainty that would be clearly understood.

I came gradually to see that the Orthodox

Eastern Church was in exactly the same position as the Anglo-Catholics; for it maintains that the Church has never been able to speak with divine authority since the first seven general councils. Thus both Anglo-Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox Church base their position on the belief that, at a certain point in history, the Church of Christ has ceased to teach the world, a position I could no longer hold.

In the light of Lisieux I came to see how purely theoretical is this appeal to an Undivided Church. It is rejected by both the other bodies who form the court of appeal—the Eastern and the Roman. Neither of these Communions recognizes it in any sort of way. More than this, it is only held by a minority of the Anglican Communion to which I belonged. How could I continue to hold this view against such odds?

The next point which began to trouble me was: How does this authority of the Undivided Church work? Where is it focussed? What instrument is there for applying it? Outside the Anglican Communion, none!

Within the Anglican Communion the normal authority, and the one which I always wished to follow, was the Bishop of the Diocese or the House of Bishops. And here I began, for the first time, to be anxious about the Bishops.

Hitherto I had been absorbed in the ministry in which I was heavily involved. All around me were

men of the deepest sincerity, men who were making great sacrifices, men of obvious piety, all holding the same views as myself. All these firmly believed that, in course of time, the Anglo-Catholic movement would win the English Church; and that the Bishops, who were confessedly in a most difficult position, would gradually come to understand—all the more so as certain of the Bishops were becoming increasingly sympathetic. Personally, I had very rarely met any of the Bishops officially, though I had often done so in other ways; and they had, without exception, been most considerate, courteous, Christian gentlemen, trying, in very difficult circumstances, to understand and unite within their control three completely divergent points of view—the Evangelical, Modernist and Anglo-Catholic. And it was always a cause of sadness to me that, with all their desire to be sympathetic, they seemed to have so little understanding of Catholic authority.

But now, seeing the vital necessity of authority, the question forced itself upon me with an insistence which I could not avoid. How is it that the Bishops, to whom I must normally look for authority, have so little understanding of what Catholic authority means? What in the old days seemed a temporary anomaly now seemed to go far deeper. I kept asking myself: How can the English Church be part of the Catholic Church when the progress of the Catholic Faith within her borders depends upon the conversion of the Bishops to that very Faith? In

other words, I was up against the question as to how it was possible for Anglican Bishops to be Catholic Bishops and in disagreement with the historic Faith of East and West on such vital questions as the Priesthood and Sacramental Grace. And so from the question of authority I passed to that of unity—the next great question fatal to the Anglo-Catholic position.

UNITY

Having seen the essential relationship between Authority and Unity from the positive side at Lisieux, and having seen in the Scriptures how the Church had always, from her earliest days, regarded any breaking of the Unity as the worst possible sin, I was now becoming far more acutely conscious of it from the negative side. Once you admit that the Church has ceased to speak with authority, then unity ceases also. I could see all clearly now—how, ever since we separated from the Supreme Authority ordained by Our Lord Himself, we became divided not merely as a body but in doctrine.

It became clear to me that the result of the Reformation was the establishment of a series of National Churches, all independent of one another, of which the Church of England is one. Ever since my Ordination I had believed that State control over the Church in England was a dead letter—a relic of the past, a temporary condition into which we, for the time being, had lapsed. It was not till the

last two or three years that I was forced to realize, against all my wishes, that, try to argue as one might, the control of the Church by the State is inherent in the present constitution of the Church of England. The recent Parliamentary debates showed this only too clearly. The Church of England is a National Church, independent of all other churches, and her doctrinal formularies are subject to the State.

When I came to look more seriously into the Orthodox Churches of the East I found it was very much the same with them. I had always assumed that the Eastern Orthodox Church was one both in Faith and government. Whereas the truth is that, after separating from Papal authority, the Eastern Orthodox Church has also broken up into National Churches. As there was no supreme spiritual authority, national and independent Churches arose.

The Russian Church led the way and was the first to establish her independence: and her example was followed by Greece, Serbia and Roumania, and in later years, by Bulgaria.

Owing to their belief that after the seven councils the definition of all necessary doctrine was complete, and owing to their national conservatism, they have kept the unity of the Faith to a very great degree, but in practice have become completely secularized.

DOCTRINAL UNITY

But far more serious was the question of differences in doctrine. Once you get away from the supreme

authority of the Papacy there is no control over doctrine; and, instead of one united voice, you get endless different opinions.

In the Eastern Church this unity of doctrine has been very largely retained; but the reason is that they hold that there can be no further definition of doctrine since the Seven Councils: that is to say, that the Church can cease to speak with one voice—a position which I could no longer hold. Thus the unity of the Eastern Church in matters of Faith is rather of the nature of a unity of stagnation in the sense that it has no means of meeting any further needs as the world goes on; it has lost the power of further decision.

But in the Anglican Church it was entirely different. Here there existed three distinct points of view, the Evangelical, Modernist and Anglo-Catholic.

And these three views were completely contradictory, yet all active and operative.

The existence of these three points of view side by side had not troubled me very much. It had seemed to me quite reasonable and good that they should all exist side by side, and that those holding them should work in as friendly a way as they could within the same Communion, and that Truth must ultimately prevail. And I had no doubt but that the Truth lay with the Anglo-Catholics.

But now all this was changed. Instead of regarding it as a good thing my mind became tortured

with acute anxiety. How could two completely contradictory views of Apostolical Succession, the Priesthood and the Sacraments, specially of the Blessed Sacrament, exist side by side within the one Church speaking with Divine Authority to all the world?

Comprehensiveness as a principle had been shattered for me by the Gospels and the Epistles, shattered for ever. I now saw that the comprehensiveness of the Church of England was not a principle but a necessity, a necessity because there was no authority which was able to say which opinion was right and which was wrong. The Anglican Church as a teacher had ceased to be.

The only authority was the personality of the person or group of persons holding each point of view. The formularies of the Church of England were no authority, for they could be interpreted to suit each party. In any case, to be in Communion with Evangelicals and Modernists, I now saw, meant being responsible for what they taught; it meant countenancing what I knew was not the Truth.

Though I could see this, yet it was a long time before I could personally grasp the full meaning of it. Old arguments still had their force, so deep set was I in the old standpoint. "The old Evangelical teaching was passing away. Anglo-Catholicism was increasing steadily. Why worry about theories of authority when there was so much work to be

done?" So argued my friends, and so indeed I desired to argue too.

But what about Modernism, that teaching in the Church which attempts to make supernatural revelation fit in with the framework of present day knowledge; and, in order to do so, attempts to explain away the miraculous and to minimize the Divine claims of Our Lord? I had always been conscious of it as the outcome of the Broad Church party; and what I had heard of the Girton Conference in 1921 and of the statements made there had given me an uneasy feeling. But again friends had argued that these were mainly armchair critics, intellectual cranks, university professors out of touch with human life, that their teaching was purely destructive, with nothing positive to give to the ordinary person, and that therefore it could have no permanent effect. Anglo-Catholicism had a positive message and would therefore prevail in the end. I had accepted this view as coming from men much older than I who knew the situation far better than I did—all the more because my attitude had always been that it was wisest and fairest to live and let live and let men speak out their minds.

But in the light of Lisieux and of the facts of authority and unity as I had seen them there, and in view of the New Testament teaching about the unity of the Church and of its Faith, I was now much more sensitive to the whole thing; and the more I considered it the more serious it became.

Sentences from the report of the Girton Conference of Modern Churchmen (1921) such as—

Christ "did not claim Divinity for Himself."

or—

"We must absolutely jettison (i.e. cast aside) the traditional notion that His Personality was not human but divine."

or—

"I do not suppose for a moment that Jesus ever thought of Himself as God."

Such sentences as these filled me with a sickening sense of insecurity such as I had not felt before. I wished to believe that these were merely armchair theories out of touch with human life; but how could I when I knew that this sort of thing was taught by the head of a Theological College recognized by the Church of England? This kind of teaching was to spread through the parishes.

I could not resist the conclusion that, earnest and devoted as these Modernists undoubtedly were in their desire to adapt the Christian Faith to modern intellectual problems, they were reducing Christ to the level of a man, as did the rationalists of St. John's day.

"Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God."

And it was of these that the Apostle of Love found himself compelled to say:

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither

bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II JOHN 10, 11).

I was faced to-day with the same thing under another guise. They were dividing Christ, undermining the Personality of Our Blessed Lord—they were in effect denying the Deity of Christ.

So strong, however, was the "give and take" habit of mind in which as an Anglican I had been brought up, and so strong my dread of anything approaching a "heresy hunt" that, though I could see the thing so clearly, yet I kept saying to myself: surely I am exaggerating the whole thing, getting unbalanced in my outlook.

But here again I was met by another fact. It might or might not be true that Evangelicalism was dying away; but one thing I did know for certain, and that was that Modernism was alive and growing in many directions. It was openly preached in some of the most important pulpits of the Church of England. I noticed it increasingly among the clergy (I sometimes thought I noticed it amongst Anglo-Catholics), but, above all, I was constantly meeting it in its effects upon the laity. Whether or no the Deity of Our Lord was being actually denied by the Modernists the general effect upon the laity—not the Anglo-Catholic laity only, but the laity as a whole—was that they were increasingly under the impression that the Church of England was vague and uncertain upon the point. The more I came in contact with souls, specially those outside the Anglo-

Catholic world, in all classes of life and of every type, the more I became convinced that Modernism was sapping the supernatural life among English Christians.

And the Church of England is helpless. The Bishops, in their efforts to reassert some authority, are clearly finding themselves, to a great extent it seems unwillingly, compelled by misinformed public opinion to use their new-found authority for the suppression of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, which is after all one of the greatest manifestations of belief in the Deity of Christ.

(In so doing they cause immense distress to many of the most devout of their people.)

At the same time they are compelled to leave the Modernist teaching unrebuked, precisely because of the same public opinion, which would resent any hindrance to free thinking, and so the Bishops find themselves unable to protect the doctrine of the Deity of Their Lord.

The Prayer Book question never loomed so largely in my mind. It was merely a symptom of a far, far deeper thing—namely the inability of the Church of England to maintain any unity in even the most fundamental doctrines.

These, then, were the two things fatal to the position of Anglo-Catholics.

First the question of Authority: the belief that the Church, the divinely ordained Teacher of the world, could ever cease to teach clearly and authorita-

tively: and secondly the belief that the Church could be divided either visibly in her corporate life or in her Doctrine.

Authority and unity were inseparable. Anglo-Catholicism has no authority and is in open and visible communion with doctrines which are contrary to the historic Faith and contradictory one to the other, and are destructive of a true belief as to the very Personality of Our Blessed Lord—the foundation of the Christian Religion.

The whole point of the Church is that it is the Society founded by Our Lord; its authority comes from Him, and if He is only what these Modernist teachers maintain, then the claim of the Church on the allegiance of men is a false claim.

HOLY ORDERS

All that I say on this most delicate subject I wish to say with the utmost tenderness and reverence for those who still hold the views which I once held so very strongly. It may seem strange to many, but the question of Holy Orders was one of the last to trouble me. One reason, I think, was because I was so sure of them; but the main reason was because I saw, from the very first, that the real question was always that of Authority and Unity.

Our Lord had founded a Church to teach with Divine Authority, and He had ordained that that Church should be One: thus only could the Truth be preserved. I had gradually been driven to the

conviction that the Catholic Church was that divine Authority: there was no rival claimant. I was entirely absorbed in this point, and it was only as I became conscious of the Divine character of that Authority that I began to realize the seriousness of the fact that that Authority had decided against the validity of our Orders and Sacraments.

I had for a long time taught and believed that, since the Anglican Church had the Apostolical Succession and the Historic Priesthood and Sacraments, therefore she was a part of the Catholic Church. This was my teaching in my pamphlet "Notes on the Catholic Religion." But I came to see that this was not so. The first question is and always must be where is the Authoritative Church of Christ, world-wide and visibly one, speaking with His Divine Authority?

Once you have found that Church you must submit and enter within its unity. If you do not do so, then, even if you possess valid Orders and Sacraments, you are still outside the Catholic Church; as is the case with the Eastern Orthodox Church, whose Orders and Sacraments the Catholic Church has always held to be valid.

As the arguments for the Divine Authority of the Catholic Church became clearer to my mind, so did the fact that she had decided against our Orders become more urgent and pressing. When finally I became convinced of her divine authority I knew that her decision must be the true one.

Those who have read my "Notes on the Catholic Religion" will know that I always based my teaching as to the reality of Anglican Orders on the words in the Preface to the Ordination Service in the Prayer Book: specially on the words "to the intent that these orders may be continued": and also on the fact of the laying on of hands by the Bishop and the words "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands."

In this I was supported by the fact of the growth of the belief in the Sacrifice of the Altar and in the Blessed Sacrament as the Body and Blood of Our Blessed Lord. These beliefs I held in common with numbers of devout, self-sacrificing men and women about whose sincerity and honesty I have never had, and never shall have, the shadow of a doubt. All this combined to give me a complete security in my belief. I was greatly distressed indeed that others did not believe it, but I was quite convinced that it was only a matter of time and the whole Church would be won over.

But when I came to study the question I found that there were other facts which I had not known before and which completely undermined my own arguments and my own position.

Looking back now, I realize the inadequacy of my Theological training, which consisted of the usual single year at a Theological College. During that time one's great desire was to be out and at

work, and consequently, being absolutely secure in one's position as an Anglican, so long as any given position seemed supported by adequate reasons, one never questioned any further. It was only as a result of my visit to Lisieux that I was at last driven to reconsider the whole question of Orders from a quite different angle.

The first was the fact that in our present Ordinal practically every reference to Sacrifice was cut out. All the expressions which stated clearly and definitely that the purpose of Ordination was to ordain Priests to offer Sacrifice were removed.

And in the actual words of Ordination which we use now: "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest," etc., the word "Priest" was not put in till a hundred years later.

Not only this, but all mention of consecrating the Body and Blood of Our Lord in the Holy Communion as being part of the Priestly Office also disappeared.

When we come to the Holy Communion service we find the same symptoms again.

The service was rearranged so as to prevent it being regarded as a Sacrifice in the sense that Sacrifice had always been known not only in the Catholic Church but in the Eastern Orthodox as well. Almost all references to the Body and Blood of Christ had been removed, and those few on which I had depended so much were really ambiguous and had always been interpreted in different ways.

In the Catechism the words "The Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper," which I had used so often, were again not added till forty years later.

All this made it evident to me that it was very difficult to be sure that there was no change in the doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Altar and of the Presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. When I saw this, another fact which I had never really seen in its full meaning came pressing in, and that was the actual historical results of these changes upon English religion. By this I mean the removal of all the Altars from every church in the land, often the placing of the Altar stone in the doorway of the church that it might be trodden underfoot, and the making of the pulpit and the preacher the main thing in the services of the Church.

I had always regarded this as a transitory period in the history of the Church of England, and had held that her Catholicity had not been destroyed but only temporarily obscured and that the Anglo-Catholic revival would restore the old waste places. To me it was merely a challenge and an incentive to greater efforts. But now I began to see that this change was inherent in the Church of England as she was constituted at the Reformation. No such drastic alteration in the public religion of the country could have resulted had there been no such change.

This became more evident in the light of the fact that Cranmer and those responsible for the change all held views of the Sacrifice of the Altar and of the Presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament different from the historic teaching both of the Catholic Church and of the Eastern Orthodox. To them, it is clear, the word "Priest" did not convey what it had conveyed hitherto.

I began to realize that, in building up my case for Anglican Orders, I was clinging to a few details that had remained, and was ignoring the immense alterations that had been carried out, the very great bulk that had been removed.

Finally, I had always been under the impression that the decision of the Catholic Church against the validity of our Orders had been rather an aggressive and arbitrary act: but I found, on examining the subject, that the Catholic Church only made her decision as the result of an appeal by certain members of the Anglican Church who hoped for a favourable decision.

The Catholic Church had no great need to make any such decision. Her position had apparently always been quite clear. She had always re-ordained anybody who joined her and who possessed Anglican Orders.

When requested to do so, she made a most careful study and finally decided against them. The more I considered it, the more impossible from any point of view was it for the Catholic Church to have done

anything else. How could she say that Anglicans possessed a Sacrificing Priesthood when two thirds of the Anglican clergy would have completely repudiated the idea?

The Catholic Church has been criticized for basing her decision on the intention of the Ordinal, but surely that intention is clearly corroborated by the Anglican ministry which it has produced.

All this was very, very difficult to face and to realize as a fact. It is difficult enough to have to give up one's most cherished beliefs; but when doing so involves the hurting of many whom one loves and the injury of the work of some of one's most devoted companions it is almost more than one can bear.

Many who read this will ask themselves "Does he then regard all his past Ministry, all his ministerial acts as unreal?" It depends upon what is meant by unreal. If by unreal is meant mistaken—Yes. But if by unreal is meant that the souls ministered to did not receive the Graces they deserved and needed, then the answer is—Of course they did receive them.

I feel certain that the great majority of them did receive all that they needed, but not in the manner which they thought.

It is impossible to believe that God cannot use the mistakes of those who act in good Faith and out of them bring a blessing in the end.

How can I think otherwise when it is through the Anglo-Catholic movement and through association and comradeship with so many of its devoted men

and women that Our Lord has given me so many blessings—leading me through it to that further vision of the true Faith.

Once this further vision is seen—then, however much one may desire to do so, it becomes impossible to continue where you are.

SUMMARY OF PART II

We have now come to the end of the argument. At Lisieux for the first time in my life, I came face to face with the Catholic Church as a living reality.

I recognized at once that I was in the presence of the supernatural in a way I had never been before. This supernatural life I came to see was the result of a definite certainty about Truth. This certainty about Truth was the result of a Church which claimed to be the Divinely Authorised Teacher of the whole world. Claiming the Divine assistance of the Holy Spirit, she taught the same Faith wherever she went and demanded obedience from all races, and was externally and visibly one.

The source of her authority and the centre of her unity this Church maintained was, by Our Lord's express appointment, to be found in one place only, the Papacy, and therefore to belong to this Church submission to the Papacy was necessary. When I turned to the Scriptures I found this confirmed in every detail. Our Blessed Lord ordained His Church to be a teaching church which should go into all the world and teach the whole of humanity. He endowed her with His own divine authority, so that she should command the obedience of all men. He

promised that the Holy Spirit should guide His church into all Truth and that He Himself would be with her till the end of time.

Our Blessed Lord also prayed that His Church should be externally and visibly one, so that the world seeing its unity might recognize its supernatural origin and might realize the Deity of its founder.

This exterior unity was not to be something imposed from outside but was to be the result of the Church's interior unity with the life of the Godhead through her union with her Lord. Thus the unity of the Church could no more be broken than can the unity of the Godhead.

Not only this. Our Blessed Lord gave special promises to St, Peter, made him chief of the Apostles and appointed him the foundation stone and the chief authority and ruler of His visible Church on earth. The central truth which the Apostles taught without any shadow of compromise was the Deity of their Lord; from this Truth flowed all their supernatural authority and all the supernatural life of the Church. Any who questioned the Deity of their Lord was excluded at once from the unity of the Church.

Where is there such a Church to-day? Can the Anglican Church in any way claim to represent the Church which we have seen was founded by Our Blessed Lord in the Gospels? She cannot do so for two great reasons; she has no authority: and she has

no unity. She does not even claim to be an infallible teacher, and consequently she can exert no authority —can call forth no obedience. Those other members who desire some authority, the Anglo-Catholics, have either to look to the past and in so doing have to admit that the Church of Christ has ceased to speak with authority; or else they have to look to the future, to a day when Christendom may again be reunited: but one thing they cannot do, and that is point to a Divine Authority speaking in clear and certain tones to-day. And because there is no authority in the Anglican Church, therefore there is no unity. Contradictory doctrines are taught within her fold both as to the meaning of Apostolical succession and as to the meaning of the Sacraments themselves. How can a church which allows contradictory doctrines to be taught be in any way a guardian of the One Truth?

But worse even than this: so uncertain is her teaching that she leaves her children in doubt as to the Personality of Our Blessed Lord. She allows teaching which gives her children the impression that Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is not truly God. Nothing could be more terrible than this.

If then the Anglican Church fails to fulfil Our Blessed Lord's commands, is there any Church which does do so? Yes, there is. The Catholic Church. She is the only church which goes into all the world claiming a Divine Authority to teach all nations. She is the only church which claims a

supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit which keeps her from error whenever she teaches anything to be necessary in Faith and Morals.

She alone demands absolute obedience from her children, and her people give their obedience gladly.

She alone teaches one Truth wherever she goes; and she alone preserves a visible unity throughout the whole world. The central Truth which she teaches is the Godhead of her Lord. It is the basis of all her authority, the source of all her supernatural life. She never allows this truth to be questioned, for one moment: if any one did so he would be ejected from her visible unity. She alone gives any effective meaning to our Lord's promises to St. Peter, through the doctrine of the Papacy, which is at once the source of her authority and the centre of her unity.

No other church makes any such claim! She stands alone, self-evident to all the world. There could be but one conclusion. However much I might love the associations which had gathered round the Church of England; however close the ties of friendship with many souls within her fold might be; the Church of England could no longer hold my allegiance, and I must make my submission to the one Church which claims a Divine Authority and alone fulfils the commands and purpose of Our Blessed Lord.

PART III

PART III

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters we have seen the result of that study of Holy Scripture which my second visit to Lisieux led me to undertake. We must now pick up the thread of the story where we left it at the close of that second visit. It is necessary to do this because it is not mere argument which in the end is the deciding factor; but it is something quite different which causes the soul to make the act of the will which in the end decides the issue. It is possible to see the argument and yet remain outside it.

As I left Lisieux the second time all I knew was that I had before me an almost impossible task. I had to try to arrive at an unbiassed view of the Catholic Church and I was utterly at a loss as to how to do so. Again every step I took towards this was against all my desires, both spiritual and human. Spiritually—it seemed so utterly impossible that Our Lord could wish me to interrupt or lay down the ministry which He had so clearly blessed through no deserving of my own; humanly, if by any chance "Rome" should prove to be right, it would mean the upheaval of my life and work at an age when it was

scarcely possible to begin again, and also the rending of almost every human tie and association.

Every effort seemed so weak against the weight and influence of all my upbringing; every step so small in comparison with the distance to be travelled before one could hope to arrive at a detached point of view. Sometimes I would lay it all down for a few months, despairing of any solution; merely to pick it up again later on. It is only possible to sketch very roughly the process by which prejudices and misunderstandings came to be dispersed.

The first stage was one of anxious study. I remember well sitting down to a careful reading of Bishop Gore's "Roman Catholic Claims" on the one hand and Dom Chapman's reply to him on the other. How could I, who knew so little of all the facts, distinguish as to who was right and who was wrong? At the end, however, the following fact seemed to stand out very clearly. The Anglican interpretation of the promises to St. Peter as set forth by Bishop Gore was purely destructive and had no positive message for the world, but had in fact produced a chaos of conflicting opinions; while the Roman interpretation of these promises as explained by Dom Chapman had in fact resulted in a world-wide Church, with Authority; and at Unity in itself. All the other books I read led me to the same conclusion, namely, that the only effective interpretation of the promises to St. Peter is the Catholic interpretation, viz. the Papacy.

This stage of reading and study is of course a duty

to all who have the time and ability to undertake it; but from the beginning I could never feel that it was essential to finding out the truth about the Catholic Church; it always seemed to me that the secret must lie somewhere else. Later I learned how absolutely true this is.

I am sure it is important to emphasize this fact: that the study of history by itself is not the only, and can never be the main, method of arriving at the truth. There must be some means common to all minds and to all stages of society.

Some time after I began to study the question I received a letter which put this very well: "I fully recognize that I ought to study the matter more closely and will read carefully anything you recommend: but at the same time I cannot help feeling that a knowledge of historical documents, etc., should not be necessary to discover Christ's Church. Still, if one is in any way competent to do the reading it is of course a duty."

I emphasize this point because some souls are inclined to regard the problem as outside their powers of solution, thinking that they can never learn the real facts of history; and also because some people are inclined to browbeat those whom they know to be wavering (out of love for them I am sure), by pointing out their lack of historical knowledge.

One of the greatest difficulties to me at first was the fact that "The Roman Catholic Church" seemed essentially foreign; and on that account I feared and distrusted it as something alien and strange; which,

it also seemed to me, could never possibly win the English nation. To become a Catholic meant stepping right out of the prevailing English mentality, and to one who had hardly ever been outside England this was terribly difficult to face. I shrank from it with all my being; it all seemed so hopeless.

But when one came right up against it, one began to see that any Church which is to be a world-wide Church can never be purely national. I could see that it was Nationalism which was threatening the whole fabric of Western civilization in material things, and that people were increasingly demanding some international basis for human life. This being so in merely human affairs, it was obviously more urgent in religion than ever. In point of fact the numerous Protestant bodies show obvious signs of their consciousness of this and are struggling to achieve some sort of international unity.

But founded upon what? It is difficult to see that their basis can be anything more than the goodwill of the peoples concerned, which would be inadequate in the face of any great international crisis. Catholic internationalism on the other hand is founded not upon human goodwill but upon the Divine promises of Our Lord to His Church, which can never fail. And as a matter of history, it is the Catholic Church which alone has survived—again and again triumphing over most appalling setbacks—the great cataclysms which so often have convulsed the face of Europe.

But to say that the Catholic Church is inter-

national, and therefore very largely foreign, does not mean that she cannot therefore win the English people. For the more I considered the question the clearer it became that the genius of the Catholic Church was just that while holding fast to her international character she was able in a marvellous way to adapt herself to and reflect the characteristics of the different nations. This, I began to see, was the answer to the argument so often put to me: "Remember you see Rome at her very best in England; you should go abroad and see her as she really is"; the implication being that the world-wide Catholic Church was carefully selecting all her best men and concentrating all her energy to meet the specially exacting demands of the English soul, and that less care was necessary among other nations.

Surely in any case such an argument betrays a very great lack of proportion and a certain national conceit, whereas the real answer is that Catholicism as practised by Englishmen is naturally less uncongenial to their non-Catholic fellow countrymen than Catholicism in the setting of some foreign country with whose ways and habit of thought they are out of sympathy. The argument that has to go abroad to find flaws in the Church, thus bringing national prejudice into play, is surely a sign of weakness and not of strength in the position of those who bring it.

In view of the great advance of Catholicism in the last hundred years in England, it would seem rash to prophesy that it will never regain the English race.

Indeed it seems far more probable now to me that with the present movement towards internationalism, and the universal tendency towards materialism in thought and secularism in politics, those souls who feel that desire for supernatural faith which is their birthright will be driven, in all parts of the world, for refuge to that world-wide Church which alone has been able to preserve it. In fact one is beginning to see that this foreign element affords to the person who becomes a Catholic a release from national prejudice and an entry into a far wider vision of the world as a whole which brings with it a far greater sympathy and understanding of its needs.

But however true all this may be in the future, it remains true at the moment that any one who becomes a Catholic has to cut himself off to a very great extent from the prevailing attitude of mind in English people; and from the national point of view alone is bound to alienate many of his closest friends. All this is very hard for one to whom England and all that England means has always been the very centre of his life.

To one who has been ministering for some years in the Anglican Church this double fact is specially vivid. By becoming a Catholic he enters a world-wide Church possessing the experience of the ages and a knowledge of all nations, but at the same time he enters the ranks of what at the moment in England is in a minority; and from that instant is regarded as an alien.

All those avenues for reaching the public life of

England which the Anglican Church provides are immediately closed to him. During my last days as an Anglican I saw a great deal of the village life of England; and it was increasingly borne in upon me that I was stepping out of all contact with what is surely one of England's chief glories, her country villages and their parish churches, and that in so doing I was surrendering my old hope of winning them back to the faith, with the help and goodwill of their clergy as an invaluable asset towards the fulfilment of that hope.

Added to this, I knew that all my personal links with the Universities and Public Schools, with those young people, in West London and in the great industrial towns all over the country, who had shown me such confidence and trust and whose difficulties in some degree I had been allowed to meet—all these links would be automatically broken. And more than all this, an even greater loss of opportunity faced me when I thought of the many souls I had been able to reach in those crowded missions in the big manufacturing cities up and down England which the zeal and generosity of Anglo-Catholics, clergy and laity alike, had enabled me to take.

With dreadful clearness I could see the time approaching when I must walk as it were an exile in my own land, past the churches and through the parishes known so well to me but in which I should now be a stranger; past the very doors of many homes now inevitably closed to me whose welcome in the past had been such a precious thing.

To one for whom the Anglican Church had been for so many years the sphere of his ministry and the centre of his hopes all this was a grief beyond all human words. I had been driven at last to the conviction that what I had till now believed, namely, that the Anglican Church had remained Catholic in spite of the Reformation and in time would overcome the false elements which at present hindered her from reunionwith the whole Church, was untrue, and that the hard fact was that any Catholic atmosphere which still existed in her was due to a comparatively small number of "souls naturally Catholic" who clung to the beliefs which I was now being forced to abandon.

Another point which at one time troubled me a good deal was the fact that the Catholic Church so often stood against national governments, was so often the object of persecution by them and was sometimes even driven out of a country. It seemed as if there must be something wrong in a system which so often found itself in opposition to the freely elected representatives of national life. I suspected that the great authority possessed by the Catholic Church tended to produce a powerful priestly class able to obstruct public progress. I was therefore all on the side of a less powerful expression of priestly authority, and in favour of the Anglican method which made a compromise between Ecclesiastical and secular power. This I considered had saved English politics from any violent anti-clerical movement and had enabled religion to permeate all parts of the national life.

During these last years my mind had changed very greatly on these points. With the growing secularisation of public life it became manifestly clear that there must be something very worldly and un-Christlike in a Church which never stood up to the State in defence of the supernatural in faith and morals. As Our Lord had founded His Church to be the Divine Authority which was to guide the world in faith and morals, if there were never any opposition to her ruling it would show that His action in founding the Church had been superfluous. But He had actually foretold this opposition would occur. "Beware of men . . . Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake."

I came to see that the Catholic Church just because she is the guardian of the supernatural, must inevitably find herself in conflict with and be persecuted by the governments of the world, whose judgments must be primarily on the natural plane. Such conflict and persecution is a mark of the Cross, arising from the opposition which the supernatural is bound to offer to the natural; and when such opposition does not exist it is very often because religion is unreal. In national Churches it is almost impossible for this inevitable opposition to make itself effective.

Thus, all the recent legislation in the Church Assembly which tends to place more authority in the hands of the parochial councils and the laity at large, which at one time I should have thought quite sound, I now regard as a most grave and fatal error. In

practice it must defeat its own ends. It aims at winning respect and popularity from the public by putting more authority into its hands, and the only result is a corresponding lessening of the public belief in any divine Authority in the Church at all.

In fact, the converse is true. The one Church which to-day is holding her people is the Catholic Church. This is because she possesses a Divine Authority to which her children give a willing obedience. Possessing this Authority we do, in fact, find her to-day speaking her mind to governments and to kings.

As my ministry progressed the need of some clearly defined Authority grew more and more pronounced. This was obvious not only in matters of doctrine but also in morals: for example, on the questions of birth control and divorce. It became more and more impossible to hold up any definitely supernatural standard without a divine Authority behind one to give it force and meaning. It became overwhelmingly clear that in all the problems of marriage and of sex nothing but a divine Authority could check the general drift towards a purely Pagan level. And the one society possessing a divine Authority capable of saving our civilisation is the Catholic Church.

Another thing that began to perplex me in dealing with souls was the need of something to counteract that slavery to the prevailing fashion of the moment which fetters so many who wish to make the pace with their own special circle. Life

to-day is so very much a series of passing crazes. The latest stunt or fashion victimizes every one. People must be original. Their lives become a perpetual pose, and in their pursuit of the latest thing they are never themselves. Such a life is all one rush. There is no time for thought, but just a superficial movement which is taken for progress. Real personal life is being lost. This is clearly seen in the break-up of the English home. There is no time for home life: and, after all, home with its corporate life and its discipline is the nursery of true life and character.

All this is reflected in the Anglican Church. She is very much the victim of the age at any given moment. In her anxiety to meet the difficulties of the modern mind she is too ready to embrace and give voice to the ideas and theories prevailing at the moment, and to give them an importance which is not really justified. The latest scheme for social betterment, the latest theories in psychology, the latest results of Biblical criticism, are preached upon in pulpits, written about in magazines, and discussed at meetings in a way which obscures the great fundamental truths of the Christian religion.

The result is that the Anglican Church presents the character of a debating society discussing open questions rather than of a teacher of eternal truths divinely revealed for the guidance of the spiritual and moral life of the world.

I saw how the Catholic Church had preserved her identity all down the ages, yet was eternally able to

meet every new phase of thought and life, absorbing what was true and rejecting what was wrong. I saw her outlasting all those points of view which she had seemed to take so long to weigh before either accepting them or rejecting them.

And so having seen her thus constantly preserving her children from the restless, swaying tumult of temporary opinion I began to realize more acutely than before what the absence of such guardianship entailed.

I became more and more conscious of the deadly effect of that vague uncertainty with which the Anglican Church surrounds her children, till I became finally convinced that it was entirely contrary to the revealed will of Our Blessed Lord. It does not lead to truth but to a terrible uncertainty and to a real paralysis of Faith. Poor human nature needs above everything else a guide which can lift it above the vagaries of the human mind and above the flood of momentary passion. And the Catholic Church alone can do this.

It is almost impossible to describe the process by which one arrives at certainty in questions of the soul. I can only very roughly trace the progress of things as they appear to me now. During the years that followed my visit to Lisieux two processes were going on side by side in me. On the one hand the study of the Scriptures and such reading as I could manage, on the other a gradually increasing confirmation of what I found in Scripture from my experience of human souls in a very varied ministry

which touched almost every type of English life. It is very difficult now to determine at exactly what point new facts came in with increasing force and old ones began to lose their hold, or at what point uncertainty gave way to conviction.

In the first stage the whole question was just a vague doubt at the back of my mind, so vague that it required some definite fact or association to recall it: for example, passing a Catholic Church; reading about Catholicism in the papers or hearing of any conversion to Catholicism. All these things began to influence me, for I could now relate them to my own experience at Lisieux. They kept recalling to me the fact that it was to Catholicism as I had seen it there that I owed the deepest supernatural experience of my life.

The second stage was when vague doubts became definite uncertainties, and yet there was no new certainty to balance things on the other side. At first by far the greater weight was on the side of Anglo-Catholicism and the Anglican Church. I was looking all the time for support for my own position and watching for flaws in the argument on the other side; afraid all the time lest the Catholic arguments should prove unanswerable. During this stage it was a great effort to take up a book on the other side; it demanded a real effort of the will to read anything which might tend to a further unsettlement from which I shrank more than words can tell—I was so hoping to find that the views I then held were right. From time to time I was able to put it all

aside for a while for it had not yet become the one all-absorbing question. At this stage I jumped at any argument or welcomed anybody who could give me an explanation of things that were difficult.

But the uncertainty grew; and very slowly the whole question became overwhelming, the one thing ever at the back of my mind. Everything now became uncertain. I began to realize that I was losing hold of the beliefs that I had cherished most, and yet was getting nothing certain to fill their places.

It was like moving in an impenetrable fog. How could I ever get certainty again? Filled with doubts about my own position, I was equally uncertain about the Catholic claims. I remember once stopping short during a walk and saying to myself: "Could there be any greater depths of uncertainty than this? If ever I get certainty again it will indeed be a supernatural thing."

And all the time, when everything else was uncertain, one thing seemed terribly clear: and that was the apparent ruin of all that had seemed so clear in my vocation if in the end "Rome" were to prove to be right. But heavier far than this was the weight of responsibility that weighed me down at the thought of the dismay and pain I might be forced to give to many souls by what they would think to be a desertion of my post. And was all this to be incurred merely for the sake of an uncertainty?

The only thing of which I was certain in my mind

at this point was that all my work must go on as long as I could possibly do it, that I must not move before I was absolutely compelled, just because to throw many others into chaos and confusion except on the basis of an absolute certain conviction would be a terrible thing to do.

If some feel that I continued teaching and preaching until too near the time of my actual decision, let them think for a moment of the awful responsibility of letting any doubt pass from my mind to others until I knew that it was a permanent doubt. The moment I ceased to preach many began to be anxious. People even wrote to religious papers to enquire the reason of my silence, and at one time I returned to public preaching just to allay these doubts and fears; because, full of uncertainty as I was, I could not get the conviction necessary to take a step which would involve so many. It was indeed a terrible situation.

For those who have been Catholics all their lives it will be difficult to realize how such uncertainty can exist. With the Catholic Church behind them and the unchanging Faith to live by, it must be almost impossible for them to do so. What I have written above may seem to show an exaggerated sense of personal responsibility; but when Church Authority is so vague and weak as it is in the Anglican Church the individual becomes far more prominent, and personality has far more influence, than in the Catholic Church where Authority and Unity make the individual of less importance. It was just

this terribly individual character of my ministry which was one of the causes that led me to see the lack of authority and unity in the Anglican Church so clearly.

In that Church personality plays far too great a part. The true relationship of the individual personality to the Church as a whole is not understood by Anglicans. The necessity of subordinating the individual to the life of the Catholic Church is strongly questioned, yet surely it must be inevitable in any Society which is to possess any authority and unity at all. "If so-and-so goes over to Rome it will be the end of him." How often I have heard that said, whereas the truth really is that when a person becomes a Catholic he finds his true relationship to the whole Church and is merged in the greatness of her character and life.

Another thing which about this time revealed to me how far I was moving from my old position was the fact that I could no longer answer certain problems and questions or help people in certain difficulties. How could I answer questions as to why different bishops taught different doctrines? How could I advise souls as to whom it was their duty to obey when there was no voice to guide them? How could I possibly answer such questions as these, when this sense of the lack of authority and unity in the Church of England was hammering at my brain all day long?

At times I wondered if it was some lack of humility, and of gratitude for the ministry put into my

hands, which had caused me to become unsettled and question my position. Friends were at hand to point out that it was probably due to some psychological obsession or to a naturally uncertain temperament.

Another thing that added to the confusion was the variety of suggestions that were made as to my motives. Some said I was giving in, deserting, seeking my own salvation at the expense of others, taking the line of least resistance; others declared that I was taking a morbidly sacrificial line, that I had a genius for self-torture. Again some told me that it was selfish because in "Rome" there would be no hindrances and my ministry would be easier; while others said that the moment I became a Catholic I should hardly be made use of at all—and so it all went on, till at last one felt it was useless to listen to any one at all.

But more shattering still were those who said that such an upheaval might perhaps smash my faith entirely and that I might end up an agnostic—that if I questioned Anglicanism to-day I might be questioning Rome to-morrow. I was told continually that those who went over to Rome were happy only for a time and then were disillusioned and finally deteriorated.

I was specially told this by someone whom I was asked to go and see, whose great learning and many years gave his opinion considerable weight. Coming from such an one it oppressed me very greatly, until in reading the life of Janet Erskine Stuart I found

that when she had been sent to Gladstone for advice under similar conditions he had said the same thing to her, saying it would mean moral and spiritual suicide and deterioration. She afterwards became Mother-General of the Society of the Sacred Heart, which proved to me that the disaster of which I had been warned did not inevitably follow the step which I contemplated taking.

But at the time, all this depressed me beyond all words and sapped my courage.

Gradually, however, one passed on to the next stage—the stage when certainty began to make itself felt. First of all it was just a growing conviction that there was no answer to the claims of the Catholic Church and that no real argument could be put forward for Anglo-Catholicism, and that in spite of all its goodness it was outside the Catholic Church.

At this stage of my progress all that I felt was an intellectual certainty, which did not at first affect any other part of my personality. My heart and my will were still wrapped up in all the associations of my old life. I could see the truth of the Catholic claim, and yet it was outside my personal life in a curious sort of way. Then in a mysterious way this too began to change, and every part of my personality and my life was permeated by continual little confirmations of the intellectual truth which had hitherto been outside me. Incidental happenings, circumstances around me, things that people said, persons whom I met, letters which I received, all began to point in one direction in a cumulative

sort of way. Books that I picked up or was given to read to hold me back had now definitely the opposite effect. And now, without any effort on my part, by a process clearly outside me, everything began to fall into place with an increasing rapidity, and I became dispassionately convinced that there could only be one end.

So far as I can judge I had never had any emotional attraction to the Catholic Church. It had been a gradually growing consciousness of the inevitable result of coming face to face with what against all my natural inclination I had found to be the truth. People told me I was fascinated by the "witchery" of the Catholic Religious Life and "the glamour of Rome." But to me these phrases were meaningless—it was a language I did not understand. The only attraction to me was that the Catholic Church was the home of Truth. Not long after I took the first step towards severing myself from all the associations of the past; and I left the Community to stay in a country vicarage for a little rest and quiet. The moment I took this definite step two things happened.

First of all any clearness of vision, any vivid consciousness of truth which I had had left me. I simply knew that I had embarked upon an inevitable course and that there was only one thing to do—but all motives for doing it seemed removed.

The second thing was that all those most closely linked with me became conscious that things were growing more definite; and one and all used that

final great appeal, by far the hardest to resist; the appeal on behalf of all those souls whom I loved so dearly and who would be so dismayed and bewildered if I took the final step. "It seems to me that some personal sacrifice is demanded of you for the sake of those who depend upon you"—thus wrote one of my very best friends. Others said that the really courageous thing was to stay where one was and not to leave a sinking ship, or very gently implied that there must be some selfishness and lack of love somewhere to make me contemplate doing a thing which would hurt so many souls.

Could any agony be more intense for one to whom the cry of a soul in distress had ever been an irresistible magnet, than to be told that he was needlessly flinging more pain into the surging sorrows of the world? And to be told it at the very moment when all his natural being was longing not to do it, and when all consciousness of the reason why he had to do it had been taken from him—it was indeed terrible.

How little do those who talk so readily about "going over to Rome," who write so glibly analysing from outside the motives of another soul in its hour of trial and proclaiming to the world at large how nearly they themselves took the step but were withheld by a deeper spiritual experience, how little they know the mystery of which they write; every sentence betrays the fact that they have never understood the problem at all. One of these quoted a passage from one of my books to prove that I had "gone to Rome" because I had been denied that

spiritual experience to which he laid claim: the fact being that in that passage I was speaking of emotional, not spiritual, experience: and this point he had completely missed.

One by one, persons and places involved kept passing before my mind. Souls whom I knew to be already up against some great temptation or some wearying trial in their home: others who were lying incurable on beds of suffering: young people just beginning to see and understand; parishes where I had taken missions and where priests with whom I had stood shoulder to shoulder would have to face great setbacks and could not but feel that one whom they had trusted had failed them, I saw them all.

But, worst of all, the most refined suffering came from the certainty that so many of them would never understand that it was just my love for them that compelled me to do the very thing which would seem to prove to them that I no longer really cared. They would never realize that I could not betray their trust in me by any insincerity or shirking of the truth in my ministry to them. All my human affections rose in rebellion at this awful destiny: all the old associations clamoured at my heart: my will very nearly gave in and broke before the storm.

But something came to my rescue. During the last two years I had seen others facing the same situation; amongst these there had been four souls very finely tuned who had been forced to face in each case just the very set of circumstances that seemed most hurting and most overwhelming in

their particular instances. I had stood by amazed at the sacrifices they had faced and made, and as I had watched them pass from struggle and darkness to certainty and light I had realized that here was something definitely supernatural happening before my eyes. Nothing less could have endured the struggle, nothing else could have given certainty at the last.

The courage of these souls made me ashamed of my weakness. Countless others are no doubt experiencing the same agony but they have no means of letting others know, and so their struggle remains unrecorded. And since some statement has been demanded of me, I wish to use it to help men and women realize that this question is a call which comes to souls from Our Lord. In any case it means great suffering and I want to plead that when a call such as this comes, the friends and relations of those to whom it comes will indeed do all they can to make sure that it is real, but that they will never treat it as a mere whim or fancy or try to use force in another person's spiritual life.

The soul in its freedom is Our Lord's greatest gift to man. Again and again I have seen how in this particular question Englishmen are inclined to deny to those they love their freedom of the soul. The soul is a delicate thing, and those who interfere with its development are taking a terrible responsibility upon themselves. What they consider to be an action of love becomes spiritual tyranny, and they increase the martyrdom of those they love and

drive in the nails for them in a way they little understand.

Thus all that I had seen in these other souls came to my rescue. Their triumph showed that the whole question was not a personal obsession or a delusion of the Devil. It threw into clearer light what the issue really was for me, just as it had been for them. No human affection, however true and pure, must come before the Truth. There was nothing I would not have done for the souls whom my decision would hurt so deeply, and yet I could not make the sacrifice for them that some asked me to make. Why could I not? Because though they did not realise it, they were asking me to sacrifice the Truth. Surely it will be clear to my readers that nothing less than the love of Truth could have made it possible to resist such an appeal.

The only course now was to take some decisive step in the direction of the Catholic Church and so I went to stay with a Catholic friend preparatory to putting myself under instruction. This I did without any sense of satisfaction: it was merely the only possible thing to be done.

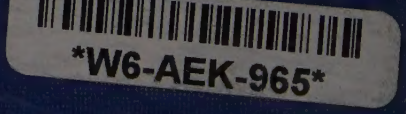
Some ten days after this the Press, from some source unknown to me, obtained confirmation of the rumours as to my decision which had been current for some time, and published the news that I was shortly to be received. This made no difference to my plans, but the premature disclosure of them brought about the very thing I had dreaded most. It was now impossible to break the news to all

of those whom I knew it would hurt most. Letters at once poured in from my friends, showing that the pain which in my imagination I had so shrunk from inflicting on them was now a definite concrete thing; intensified to them by the fact that this action of the Press had made it impossible for me to let them know personally of my decision. It seemed as though everything was falling in ruins around me.

And still there was no light, no certainty, no relief. But at last the clouds lifted and light began to appear. I waited a few days longer and then decided to put myself under instruction in one of the Religious Orders. Then peace came. Worn out and exhausted I could rest at last; for the haunting sense of uncertainty was gone. The human ache and the sense of loss was just as acute, but there was a foundation now which made it less difficult to bear.

The future in its fulness is known only to Our Blessed Lord; but this at least we do know, that though separated utterly in this world from those we love the most, yet there is no separation in eternity for them who sincerely seek His Will. I ask that those who have prayed for me in the past will not cease to do so now. I cannot but hope and believe that many, if not now at least in the days to come, may find certainty for their souls where I have found it. To that end all my prayers shall be directed and my life, if such be His Will.

Sancta Teresa, ora pro nobis!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